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THE
CITIZENS
SACRED
ENTERTAINMENT:
BEING

An Essay to Ingratiate the
Practice of Vertue, to Consummate
the Happiness of Humane Nature,
and to gratifie Ingenuous and
Religious Spirits.

By Tho^s Fyde. *W*

Βέλτιστοι μισόμαθα ὡς τὸς Θεὸς βελίζοις, Pythag.

LONDON,

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THE
CITY OF
ENTERTAINMENT:
BEING

An Essay to illustrate the
Practice of the
the History and Nature
of the City of London
and its Environs.



By T. F.

Printed by J. G. Smith, at the City of London.

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The City of London, and its Environs.
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To the truly VERTUOUS
and happily Successful

LIONEL LOCKIER

Physician and Chymist.

Worthy Sir,

 Presume the Dedication of this Treatise to your Patronage, will be no less a surprize to you, then to many others, whose censure of disgust I am not only aware of, but arm'd against. I ought in

The Epistle

custom first to beg your pardon, before I can expect your acceptance. But that certain Information suggests to me it were a vain attempt to endeavour by Rhetorical Insinuations and Pedantique Artifices, to perswade you to the exercise of a candid and generous disposition, whose respect to the Church, charity to the necessitous, curtesies to Strangers, civilities to your Acquaintance, favours to your Friends, (and particular kindnesses unto me) have given ample testimonies of a mind
not

Dedicatory.

not slightly tinctured, but deeply impregnate (that I may speak to you in your Chymical language) with those endowments which indicate a vertuous and ingenuous spirit, which Eulogium, though it may seem an Hyperbolical flourish to such which are strangers to your Person and Actions; yet to those which converse more intimately with you it will rather appear a diminution of your worth, 'tis so far from savouring of the Parasite. I am so averse from the

The Epistle

common design of Addresses of this nature, (where Authors like Rooks, choose the highest Trees they can to build in) that if an especial Providence had not intervened, which gives you a proper right unto its presentment, it had been destitute of a Patron; but jacta est alea, the Rubicon is passed, and I have here tendered to you an acknowledgment of those endearing Civilities whereby you have obliged me. That this Discourse of Religion which is as iareia פֶּחֶמֶת, the Medicine of the Soul, may

Dedicatory.

*may be as effectual for the
purifying and healing of the
minds of men, as your Univer-
sal Pill hath been successful
in the cure of their Bodies, is
the hearty desire of him who is*

Yours in all faithful
and grateful
observance

Thomas Fydge.

Dedication

may be an excellent for the
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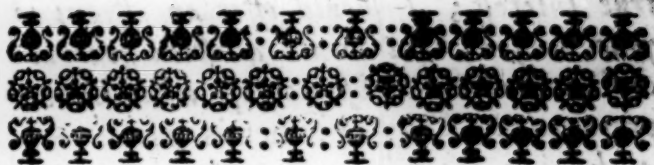
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The PREFACE
TO THE
READERS.

THough the Important Matter of this Treatise might be a sufficient apology for the omission of a Prefatory Epistle, considering that the entire Discourse is dedicated, if not to the Readers honor, yet to their use and advantage: Notwithstanding in compliance with common custom, I shall give you a taste of your entertainment in the Porch. The design of this Treatise is the advancement of true Goodness and Vertue, and to engage men to the practice of Religion by endeavouring to reconcile it to their true

The Preface to the Readers.

true Interest; I should offer an affront to your Reason, if I should question your acceptance of the substance of what is here propounded; *Quis nisi mentis inops*—— as having a tendency to make you really rich, truly honorable, divinely Epicurean, and rationally religious. I cannot augure with what resentment the style and manner of expression will be received; nor am I solicitous concerning it; yet I suppose, that it is not so anomalous, but it will meet with some corresponding genius, whose agreeable temper may incline them to a favourable aspect even upon the exterior part; yet if the Apples of Gold be but massie and ponderous, it is not much material though the Pictures of Silver be tarnished and defaced. But although it be deficient in that elegance and concinnity which so worthy a Subject deserves to be embellished and fortified with, to make the more prevalent impressions upon the minds and affections of men, I shall not fail to make abundant compensation for this defect, by a supplement of Addresses to that God whose strength is made perfect in weakness,

The Preface to the Readers.

ness, that by the perusal of this Discourse, (the fruit of my Juvenile Studies in a vacancy from a throng of secular employments) you may be awakened to serious endeavours after greater degrees of the Spirit of Life and Righteousness, and an inward acquaintance with the energy and power of true Religion, to the joy, peace, and serenity of your souls here, and to the consummation of your felicity hereafter. Here is no grateful entertainment for such who sport themselves with Polemical Divinity (falsely so call'd, as if the Deity was at odds with it self, and there was a Monomachy in the blessed Trinity) and caress themselves only with such treatments of Religion where Eris gives the Invitation, *δοξας χαλεγομεν ιερωνοις*, as Philo speaks; *Procul oh procul ite profani*. This Essay only aims at the promotion of peace in the Church, by uniform, devout, and reverent addresses to God; quietness in the State by ready submission to Publique Authority, at the happiness of civil Commerce by Justice and Truth; the honour of Religion by a suitable demeanour; the Salvation of the Soul in an entire resignation to the Divine Will and
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The Preface to the Readers.


the Glory of God in all these. I shall only advertise you, the late severe Dispensation of Providence towards this City occasioned the present Publication, in expectance that the minds of men may by so dreadful a Vistation be the better prepared for the receiving of such impressions which may better their Conversations, and inform their Understandings, which is a design worthy the utmost endeavours of your friend

T. F.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

1. That the Lord Jesus Christ, and Christian Religion have been traduced. 2. Different Censures concerning it. 3. Too just Occasions thereof given by the enormous Actions of Zealous Pretenders to it. 4. Some remiss in the Practice of real Holiness, intensely hot against all that is Relative, and the Contrary. 5. Some Orthodox in their Judgements take leave to Live Ill, because they Believe Well. 6. The Design of the Discourse, a Vindication of Religion from many Prejudices, with an account of the Reason for it. 7. A Representation of it as most acceptable to any man. 8. An Answer to an Objection, against the Authors invading anothers Office in the Publication of the present Treatise.

 UR blessed Lord and Saviour who did no sin, and in whose mouth was no guile found, but fulfil'd all righteousness, was notwithstanding his innocence, numbred with transgressours,

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gressours , and sentenced as a malefactor ; so impossible is it for the most *spotless person* to secure himself against the *calumnies* and *detractions* of an envious and malicious Enemy. That holy *Religion* , the *propagation* of which , was the design of all his publique *transactions* , may justly *complain* that it is fallen under the same *censure* with its *promoter* ; the reproaches of them that reproached him are fallen upon it , and it labours under the *same contradiction* of sinners.

2. 'Tis by some accounted an ingenious *contrivance of policy* , an *artifice and stratagem* devised by wiser heads to awe the *vulgar and common herd* of mankind to subjection : others allow it to be only a *starched piece of austerity* and sour *Stoicism* ; some again dishonour it as the *product* of *pusillanimity* , and the *index* of a cowardly and *degenerous* mind ; or *traduce* it as an heresie pernicious to the welfare of the Nation where 'tis entertain'd ; as if its genuine and natural effect were to *foment sedition* , and aggravate & heighten *petty differences* into the most *violent and barbarous* outrages.

3. How

3. How far the *exorbitancies* of them who have been the most *zealous pretenders* to advance Religion, have been contributory to the production of those notions, concerning it, which are so derogatory from its excellence, and prejudicial to its progress, a *little reflection* will be too pregnant an evidence; If we consider, how some have *usurped* its glorious Name to *patronize Rebellion* and *Innovation*, and Sainted themselves in the perpetration of the most flagitious acts both of Injustice and Impiety; as if the genius which attended Religion, instigated those which entertain'd it to the most hellish enterprizes, when on the contrary, it possesseth the minds of those which give up themselves to the manuduction thereof, with the most pure and peaceable Principles, and excites them to such sacred actions as are agreeable thereunto. And also, take notice, many have no better *title* to Religion than what they can challenge by virtue of an *over eager opposition* against a dissenting Party, and have no arguments to evidence their Christianity, except their

being *Magisterial* and *Dogmatical* in things controverted and *adiaphorons*, may pass for a demonstration of it, interesting themselves no further in Religion then the *stigmatizing* those of a *different perswasion*, if in matter of *opinion*, with the brand of *Herésie*; if in *practice*, with the style of *Superstition*, accounting *Satyrical invectives* and passionate reflections to be instances of a *religious zeal* for God, which are but the demonstrations of their *own folly* and *arrogance*, vainly supposing their *love to God* can be no better way exprest, then in their doating upon their *own Images*, and execrating all such notions which do not correspond with those models and representations of things their fancies have suggested to them.

4. 'Tis an intense and violent heat wherewith many contend against all *relative holiness*, who may be justly suspected to be in the mean time destitute of all *real* inherent and personal. And others are too prone to fix the *boundaries* of Religion, and circumscribe it with time and place, as if it had taken *sanctuary* in holy ground.

ground, and might not without a kind of sacrilege be imployed in secular affairs, and civil intercourse, and were only to be the business of *Canonical Hours*, laid aside with their *Sunday Suit*, and adjourned until the *Bells* awaken'd them to a new fit of devotion.

5. Many who call themselves *Sons of the Church*, and by a subscription to her Articles honour themselves with the surname of *Orthodox*, are yet the pest and blemishes of it, and forfeit that worthy appellation, by holding the Truth in unrighteousness, living, as if the *Commandments* had no relation to the *Creed*, or by the belief of what is true they could satisfy for what is evil; or as if he would accept (by way of commutation) of their good opinion of him, in lieu of Temperance, Justice, and Obedience to him;

— *pudet hac opprobria nobis, &c.*

6. When true Religion labours under so many prejudices, from open and intestine Enemies, and from professed Friends, when the Author and Original of it, the Essence and Nature, the Effects and Designs are

so generally misconstrued, abused and perverted; the rectifying of mens mistakes concerning it, and the *representing* of it to them in its *native* and *affecting* form, will be a very probable method to prevail effectually upon them to entertain it; for till men are convinced of the *excellency* and *advantages* of Religion, and their minds rightly informed of the nature and importance of it, it is impossible to engage them to the exercise of those duties which it requires from them.

7. The Scope of the ensuing Discourse is to beget such *apprehensions* and *sentiments* in the spirits of men concerning true Religion as are *agreeable* thereunto; and recommend it unto them upon such *motives* as are sufficient in other cases to procure *acceptance*. He that will give himself the trouble of perusing these Papers, which have nothing in them worthy but what is reflected from their subject matter and final design, and add thereunto his own meditations, shall not fail to find that Religion *comprehendeth* in it whatsoever may make it *eligible*: The verities of
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it serve to render it *acceptable* to the studies and contemplations of the *severest* reason, and of the most ingenious spirits. The *advantages* which are *twisted* with it may insinuate a liking of it in an *avaricious* nature; the peace and joy which accompany it, are sufficient to *indear* it to such whom pleasures do so *easily intangle*. That *real and solid* honour from which 'tis impossible it should be *abstracted*, makes it a prize worthy the endeavours of the most ambitious person. — *sic itur ad astra,*

Repreet humi quicunque velit —

8. If any shall object, that by this Treatise, I put my *Sithe* into anothers *Harvest*, and *intrench* upon their *rights*, who by their *Sacerdotal Function* are to administer this Province: I reply, those *Harangues*, *Defences*, and *Celebrations* of Religion which proceed from those which are ordained to such a purpose, lose much of their efficacy only because they are *theirs*, people generally suspecting they design their own Interest, and put a gloss upon their own Wares for the better put-

ting them off, and worship this great *Diana* with respect to the silver shrines. But when such, the course of whose *studies* and *employments* may be managed to a greater *temporal advantage* with the *proscribing* of Religion, shall maugre their own secular concerns, seriously *endeavour* the *propagation* of it, their *attempts* upon the Laity (which title we may use, I hope, without offence) proceeding from persons of like *passions* and *educations* as themselves, may in probability be more successful, and their Arguments fall upon them in their *full weight*, as not being *obnoxious* to that suspicion of imposture and sophistry which their discourses are *censured* to be attended with, though never so *nervous* and *apodictical*, whose *honour* and *advantage* seems to be closely *riveted* into the *interest* of Religion, which hath given occasion to some atheistical persons to name it the *Holy Cheat*; as if it were maintained in the world only to *subserve* to the *ends* of *greatness*; but the vanity of this imputation shall be manifested in the succeeding Chapter.

CHAP. II.

1. *True Religion derives it self from God.*
2. *Is allied to Heaven more neerly then other beings.* 3. *Could not have been attained by Humane Industry or Sagacity.* 4. *But was discovered by God in pity to the frailty of Man.* 5. *By his Son Fesus Christ.* 6. *This laies strong Obligations upon Men to embrace it.* 7. *Christians ought to improve it, from considering the unhappy success of Impostors.* 8. *Its Original argues its Excellence, and ought to quicken our Obedience.* 9. *Queries whereby it may be further inforced.* 10. *'Tis not introduced into the world from the Indigence, but fulness of the Divine Nature; not because God stands in need of us, but we stand in need of him.* 11. *That we ought to proportion our Gratitude and Obedience to God answerable to these*

these great Engagements which he laies upon us ; with motives thereunto.

1. **R**eligion is of an heavenly descent ; its *extraction* is from the *Father* of Eternity ; it is not the *revelation* of *flesh* and *blood*, the *spurious* and adulterous *issue* of humane Intellectuals, the forgerie and *imposture* of the *Nimrods* and *Machiavilians* of the world, to *acquire grandure* and *authority* by imposing upon the less wary and *over credulous* natures of *vulgar* persons ; But it is the product of *unparallel'd love*, consulting Infinite Wisdom concerning the *Restitution* of lapsed and degenerate Man to that *Primitive estate* of felicity and perfection in which he was created. 'Tis a *beam* descending from the *Father* of *Lights*, to *inlighten* those which sit in *darkness* and in the *shadow* of death, and to *guide* their feet into the *wayes* of peace. 'Tis the true *Elixir* prepared by the *fire* of *Divine Love* to *project* upon gross and *impure matter*, to *refine* and *transmute* it into a more noble and excellent nature, and to *impregnate* *earthly* mortals

tals with a *tincture* of Divinity ; The rays of the Sun of Righteousness ripening the Soul into a maturity for glory.

2. 'Tis an *immediate Emanation* from the Eternal Fountain of Truth and Goodness, and so neerly allied unto Heaven, that it can in a peculiar manner call God *Abba, Father* ; notwithstanding all created Beings owe their Existence to a Divine *Fiat*, and by some more *shadowy and obscure Characters* give testimony of their sacred *Original* ; yet Religion bears so much of Gods Image and Supercription upon it, that he that runs may read his Name ingraven there in *capital letters*. 'Tis the Star that guides man to *Bethlehem* ; the Mercurial Statue that points the way to true happiness ; a Treatise written by Gods own finger, teaching the method of recourse to himself. 'Tis his communication of his goodness to mankind in its *utmost dimensions*, aiming at the accomplishment and perfection of humane nature in transcendent expressions of grace and bounty.

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3. Though men by the improvement of their *natural* parts, might have enriched their minds with many *excellent notions* concerning the Divine Nature and their own; yet the most *sagacious* and acute could never have sufficiently *informed* themselves of those means which are proper and *effectual* to the attainment of the chiefest good: Nor could unlock the *Archives* of Heaven, and search the Records of Eternity, and understand the *counsels* of God concerning Mans Salvation. Here the *light* which is in *Nature's darkness* the *Universe* is still a *Chaos*; the name of a *Mediatour* is not to be found in the whole *Volume* of the *Creation*; the Scene must be changed before a Redeemer doth appear.

4. Had not God commiserated the ruins of Mankind, and provided a Saviour for them, their misery had been unavoidable, as to any means their utmost skill could have contrived or found out to prevent it. He was therefore *graciously pleased* to make such discoveries of the way of his reconciling and recovering
men

men unto him, as might be *available* to the attaining so blessed an end. And the whole method of restoring Man depending solely upon the free grace and free will of God, only *Divine Revelation* could acquaint us with the *manner* of its *dispensation*.

5. The World by wisdom knew not God, but *fluctuated* in *uncertain* opinions and conjectures concerning the Providence of God, the Immortality of the Soul, and the Rewards and Punishments of the Life to come; were altogether unacquainted with the *expiation* of Sin by the blood of a crucified Saviour, with the washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, with the way to Heaven by Faith, Repentance, and Charity. But he who from Eternity lay in the bosom of his Father, hath manifested the way into the holiest of all, and brought to *light life* and *immortality* by the Gospel.

6. What more can be said to encourage the children of men to entertain Religion, then may be deduced from this single consideration; *v. z.* That the source
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and original of it is no other then that Eternal Being, all whose Emanations are like himself, replete with abundance of love and goodness? From what *Topicks* shall *arguments* be fetched to prevail upon men, if they are not induced to accept and embrace Religion upon this account of its coming from the hands of God? It needs no other Letters commendatory then what it carries in its Divine Original.

7. The pretences of *Mahomet*, *Lycurgus*, &c. to familiarity and converse with some spiritual and holy beings, have been *effectual* to ingratiate those Precepts they designed should be embraced by their Profelytes. And shall *Truth* and *Goodness* it self, discovering the way to blis, be *rejected* and disdained as fabulous or impertinent in its Declarations, Commands, and Prohibitions, when the *Narratives* and Laws of Enthusiasts and Deceivers have been entertained as certain and necessary? Shall the *Revelation* of God have no influence upon the Souls of men to improve their *Intellectuals*, to *correct* their *Morals*; when
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the pretended Inspirations of crafty Impostors have been so unhappily progressive in the *deluding* their *understandings*, and *debauching* their *practices*?

8. It speaks the excellency and nobleness of Religion, in that it proceeds from God; it cannot be *presented* to us at any *greater* advantage; This demonstrates it to be a *faithful saying*, and makes it *worthy*, as the Apostle phraseth it, *of all acceptation*. Its near alliance to the Deity challengeth our *greatest kindness* and respect; and a serious reflection upon this one inducement, may *supersede* the consideration of all those other arguments and motives our reason may suggest unto us to perswade us to welcome and embrace it.

9. Who would not salute so lovely a beauty with *χαῖρε φῶς*, welcome thou Light of Life, thou Ray of Heaven, thou Beam of Glory, thou Panacæa of Humanity, thou Transcript of Divinity, thou blessed Emanation of the Deity, thou Directress of our Way, thou Repairer of our decayed Nature, thou perfect Consummation of our Felicity, and sacred Magnetism even of God himself?

himself? Let me invert that saying of our Lord, *Do men gather Thorns from Vines, or Thistles from Fig trees?* Who can believe that the *Fountain of Sweetness* will send forth *bitter* streams; that the *Sun of Righteousness* will drop down *mischievous* influences; that the Father of mercies, instead of *bread*, will give a *stone*, and in lieu of a *Fish*, a *Serpent*; that the Grapes of the true Vine will set the teeth on edge; that the Rose of *Sharon*, and the Lilly of the Valleys will send out an unfavoury smell? Is it no delight to sit under the shadow of the Tree of Life? Is not the fruit pleasant to thy taste? Why then shouldst thou refuse to drink of Gods Wine, to eat of his Bread, to be happy in his embraces? and this thou dost in rejecting Religion.

10. Religion is no trade set up by God in the world, to *acquire* any emolument and advantage to *himself*, as if he were *greedy* after a little of the creatures fading breath, and prided himself in their celebrations of his Name. God is infinitely happy in the *reflection* upon his *own beauty*, and in the enjoyment of his

own perfections ; and his essential glory is as incapable of accession as 'tis of diminution : The worship , service, and homage of the *creatures* can contribute nothing unto him ; 'tis at the highest, but the *acknowledgment* and adoration of that *transcending glory* which he hath possessed from Eternity, and wherein he is God blessed for ever, *Job 22. 2, 3.* *Can a man be profitable unto God ?* as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself. *Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous ? Or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect ?* The Apostle in his Sermon to the *Athenians*, treating of the Worship of God, declares that it is not instituted by God out of *indigence* and *neediness*, *Act. 17. 25.* *οὐδεμίαν τινος* , as if any thing were thereby *superadded* unto his felicity. We may warm our selves by those *fires* which we kindle for *Sacrifice*, and *smell* the Perfume of our own *Incense*, with which, though God may be well pleased, he cannot be profited : the benefit of our *service* redounds not to our *Master*, but to *our selves* ; the righteousness of man doth not extend to God ; the *Honey* he ga-
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thers is for his *own* *bive* ; the Crown he contends for is to adorn his *own* *head*.

II. The precedent Considerations should excite us to thankfulness and obedience unto him, who remembered us in our low estate, and *loved our souls out of the pit of corruption* ; God without *impairing his own happiness*, might have suffer'd us to have continued in that state of sin and misery into which we had *plunged our selves* ; but when we could by no means deliver our own souls, *he found out a ransom for us*, and offers Salvation unto us, and that upon such conditions as we cannot disallow. What *kindness* shall we think too *great* for so *faithful a friend* ? What *gratitude* too much to so liberal a *Benefactor* ? What could God have done *more for us* then he hath done to engage us to himself ? he laid all *possible obligations* on us to *win our love* and service : yet *of the God which formed us* are we *unmindful*, and *lightly esteem the Rock of our Salvation*. Where shall we find any so sensibly affected with the favours of Heaven, as to inquire, *What shall we render*

der to the Lord for all his mercies, and awaken all within them to bless the Name of God? He hath been pleased to propound unto us *effectual means* for the obtaining *Eternal life*, which are styled by the name of *Religion*; but how few are there which pursue this blessed end by a serious performance of all those *intermediate actions* which conduce thereunto? He hath showed thee O man what is good; he hath made known unto thee the path of life; Why then doth thy way lead thee to Hell, and thy goings to the chambers of death? Light is come into the world; Wherefore lovest thou darkness more than light? Thou art told thou art redeemed with the precious blood of the Son of God; wherefore then dost thou sell thy self to commit iniquity? The grace of God hath appeared to thee bringing Salvation with it; and wilt not thou be taught by it to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world? Ephes. 4. 18. Ephes. 5. 1. The Son of God hath manifested unto thee love beyond all example and expression;

and wilt thou not be constrained by the love of Christ; No Rhetorique can persuade him to Religion, who is not prevail'd upon by considering, that the Son of God the Lord Jesus Christ in Humane Nature, hath undergone and acted whatsoever is required of us; And in this sense is Religion aptly call'd by the Apostle, *the Life of God*, and an imitation of him.

CHAP. III.

1. 'Tis apparent that Religion is the Mother of Freedom. 2. The Obligation implied in its Name no way opposite to true Liberty. 3. The Freedom of holy persons exercis'd in amorous Devotions. 4. Sin restrains the Souls Essays to attain Blessedness. 5. Religion wings the Soul, and awakens it to seek for Glory. 6. Sensual men hurried too and fro by the impetuous motions of divers Lusts. 7. Their vitious Indulgences badges of Bondage. 8. Religion restores us to the Liberty we forfeited by our Apostasie. 9. Wicked men confin'd to converse with their own Jaylours. 10. We ought readily to comply with the Design of God in the Recovery of our Freedom, and accept of Divine Assistance. 11. Men in the heat of their Passions, and hurry of Business, hardly to be perswaded that Licentiousness is not true Liberty.

1. **T**Hat Liberty and Freedom are universally acknowledged to be Priviledges, and on the contrary, Bondage and Captivity accounted of as matter of Infamy and Misery, is a truth shines so clearly

in its own light, that it needs no demonstration. That Religion rescues the children of men out of a state of *slavery* and *vassalage* to the power of Darkness, and asserts them into the *glorious liberty* of the sons of God, is as evident and perspicuous as the precedent concession; And that, in this regard it ought to be acceptable, will be the inference of any that have but the *first fruits* of reason, or *sense* enough left to put a difference between what is pleasant and ungrateful to their own natures.

2. There seems indeed to be something of *bondage* in the name of *Religion*, according to their Criticism; we derive it à *Religando*, but it imports no more then such ties and engagements as result from mutual cognation, and can include nothing which is inconsistent with the greatest liberty, except we judge a *child* to be *enslaved* in its Parents arms, and a man *imprisoned* in his Friends embraces. 'Tis a Law of Love and Liberty; its silken Bonds are as Girdles and Garters, not to fetter and entangle, but to strengthen and adorn.

3. The

3. The Liberty of Religious minds is scarcely *out-ried* by the *blest Angels*, devout and pious Souls being sometime carried on the wings of ardent desire, as directly toward God as the constraining power of the *sense of Divine Love* can produce *reflection*, acting upon Infinite Goodness with the sweetest complacency and delight, and the most unbounded freedom, being above those carnal checks and controllments, which debarr all unhallowed and degenerate minds from free converse with the Divinity.

4. There is a *Sensual appetite* sits as *Queen Regent* in the Souls of all wicked persons, which gives out its Laws to the whole Man, prohibits its *intercourse* with whatsoever is not found in its *own* Dominions; though it afford no other then temporal and material objects. Sin lays a *restraints* upon those *active* and generous *Principles* wherewith the Soul of Man through the indulgence of Divine Bounty is possessed; *shackles* its *free* and Heaven-born powers, rebates that gallantry and laudable ambition by which it is prompted

to recover its Primitive Felicity ; congeals that *innate warmth* and vigour which should cherish and *promote* its Effays to Happiness ; suspends the natural energy, and propensions of the Soul , and *charms* all its vital and *vigorous* faculties into a *senseless Lethargy*.

5. Religion loosens and unfetters the Soul from its *confinement* to *material objects*; impregnates that vital Principle which is wrapt up in the Soul with activity ; spirits all the wheels of motion, and makes it swift as the Chariots of *Aminadab*; Takes off that *Embargo* by which the *Channel* to Happiness is *obstructed* , and proclaims a *free Trade* between *Heaven* and *Earth*. It awakens the Soul to a sense of its own Immortality and Original, and spurs it on to aspire by Purity, Love, and Humility, to the Crown of Eternal life and glory ; but *time* and *sense* are the *Tropicks* beyond which the affections of degenerate minds do *never* move.

6. No Character can more exactly express the state of a sensual man then that which the Apostle draws out , *Tit. 3. 3.*
where

where he describes him to be a servant to divers lusts and pleasures. Every wicked man doth *abjure* and renounce the *soverainty* of Reason, and *transfer* it upon Sense; depose that τὸ ἡγεμονικόν, whose coercive power should restrain the impetuous Effusions of the inferior Appetite, and introduceth an *anarchy* of brutish and insolent Passions, which rack the Mind by imposing commands *irregular* and *contradictory*, exacting things at an infinite distance, and of an impossible consistence. Every vanity hath a power over him; one says, Go, and he goes; another, Come, and he comes; a third, Do this, and he doth it; beside that general *conflict* between Sense and Reason, Appetite, and Conscience: there are many petty Principalities warring one against another; Pride, Covetousness, Malice, Intemperance, every of which press him to their service, upon the approach of the various *temptations*; he is possessed with a spirit casts him sometime into the *fire*, sometime into the *water*; he lackies at the beck of every inordinate desire, and is not *Master* of his *own* motion; he

he is under the power of the Creature, as the holy Apostle expresseth it, and not at his own dispose, as having *quitted* the government of Reason, and *resigned* up himself to have his Ears bored by his Lust.

7. Sinners, their actions are not squared by any other rules then those their *fancies*, consulting with their *Senses*; do *suggest* unto them; the *liberty* which they *indulge* themselves, is an *evidence* of the greatest *slavery* and basest servility: they cannot cease from sin, 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. The service of God, as is expressed in our Liturgy, is *perfect freedom*: 'Tis no badge of an abject and sordid spirit to be imployed about the affairs of Heaven, but speaks a man to be of a noble, free, ingenious and ample soul.

8. Christianity is not designed to *debase* and *effeminate* the minds of men, to *despoil* them of true *liberty*, and circumvent them into a state of bondage; but to *knock* off those *fetters*, and *file* off those *chains* by which they were detained in captivity to the power of the Prince of Darkness, and
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make them free unto Righteousness. All those Priviledges which we forfeited by being tainted with the Treason of the first *Adam*, are restored us again by our interest in the second. Religion 'tis the Mother of all real Liberty; the most absolute *Potentate* may embrace it without any suspicion of its *intrenchment* upon his royal *Prerogative*. All the children of its *Kingdom* are free; no burdens imposed, no taxes exacted of those which live in its *Dominions*. 'Tis both a freedom of state and freedom of will is the happiness of all holy men. Their spirits are too vigorous to be *confined* to this lower *region*, to be fetter'd by any *sablunary* and *sensual* objects; but they mount upward, as with Eagles wings, and *visit* the world above, and take a *prospect* of the heavenly Jerusalem and the glory of it.

9. Sensual men are still sinking into *themselves*, couching toward their *center*, till they are *buried* like coals in their *own ashes*. Self-love and worldly interest confine them to so close an imprisonment; that they live sequestred from all noble society,
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and have but the liberty of conversing with their Jaylours, such impure and unhallowed delights as issue from a dark Understanding and corrupted Will ; and make inquiry after no other Happiness then what the circumference of their own Being doth contain. They make themselves the center of all their designs , and all their actions relish of that Principle of Self , by the attractive power of which they are forcibly detained in the Regions of Death and Darknes.

10. Hath God designed to inlarge and *ampliate* the Soul of Man by the power of Religion, and to make it more *capacious* of Divine Enjoyments ; is his aim to break the *bonds of our sins asunder*, and take the *yoke of bondage* from our necks, and recover us from the *snare* of the *Devil*, and to loose us from that *spirit* of *infirmity* wherewith we are bowed down ; to deliver us from the *power of the dark Kingdom*, and translate us into that state where we shall enjoy the *priviledges* of the *sons of God* ? What readiness of mind should this beget in us, to embrace Religion, and
together

together with it a freedom from the *drudgery* of all unruly Passions, inordinate Affections, sensual Inclinations, and inconsistent commands of *self-will* and *self-love*, by surrendering up our selves to the conduct of the Spirit of God, which will make us free from the law of sin and death ! *When liberty is proclaimed to the captive, and the opening of the Prison unto them that are bound, will not the captive exile hasten out of the pit wherein there is no water, and the prisoners of hope turn to their strong hold ?* God in the Gospel offers us a sufficient power, for the overcoming all that strength which detains us in captivity, and tyrannizeth over us : Do not then O Christian idly suffer thy self to be enslaved to an hellish or brutish servitude, by a *false* belief that thou canst *not come out of darkness*, as *Job* speaks ; but by faith in an Almighty power assault the Enemies of thy liberty, that *triad* which *St. John* speaks of, *1 Joh. 2. 16.* and thy conflict shall not fail of being crowned at the last with victorious success ; and thy Soul finding it self disentangled in part from the bondage of corruption,

corruption, will endeavour more and more a perfect recovery of that Paradisiacal freedom, which upon the total subversion of the Kingdom of darkness will be the blessedness of the Saints in light.

11. I know the propounding of *Liberty* to men, by *subjection* to the Commands of God, is a *Paradox* to the licentious liver, who for the present thinks no *bondage* so severe as walking according to the *rule* of Reason and Religion, and will not believe that to be a *Paradise* which is *inclosed*; and how I should explain this Riddle to him, during his *eager chase* of his beloved game, I am at a *loss*, because then the use of *Reason* and *voice of Conscience* are neither of them attended to: But if God by any Providence stop him in his furious careere, and allay the violent ebullitions of his mind, when he consults with his own Soul, he will need no other *Tutor* to instruct him, that *Liberty* and *Vertue* are met together, that *Freedom* and *Religion* do kiss one another.

CHAP. IV.

1. Honour hath ever been prized at an high value.
2. Many need a Bridle to restrain their violent pursuit of it.
3. The Stoicks accounted the practice of Vertue, the Hebrews the observance of the Law the foundation of Honour.
4. Religious men honoured in their alliance unto God.
5. Their Glory evident in their Wisdom and Knowledge.
6. And victorious Promesse.
7. Wisdom and Power abstract from Goodness, degenerate into Craft and Cruelty. Goodness is the glory of the Divine Being, and accounted so by men.
8. Wickedness not owned by its Profelytes, till they have given it a new Name or mild Epithet.
9. Sin and Sinners represented in Scripture under odious and abhorrent forms.
10. Religion advanceth Good Men, and begets a secret esteem of them in those which are vitious.
11. The facetious or scurrilous Imputations fastened upon vertuous men, no ways really derogatory from their honor.
12. Religion an attempt adequate to the highest Ambition.
13. He that detracts from Vertue, disparageeth himself, and slights his Excellency.

1. **H**ONOUR hath the universal suffrage of all ingenious persons for an inestimable Jewel, and worthy of the greatest care

care and indeavours which can be imployed in its acquisition ; they are justly censured as base and sordid, which have no respect to their Repuration, and basely applaud themselves like the Miser the Poet speaks of, under the hisses and disregard of the world, *Populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo*. The ancient Heathens have had great esteem and *veneration* for all *true* and *real* Honour ; and many have told us, that he makes no bad bargain that can *purchase* it, though with the loss of all other Interests ; yea, that *life* it self when it comes in competition with Honour, is to be undervalued and *sacrificed* thereto ; and judged him unworthy the name of Man, which would not *subordinate* all *designs* and *indearments*, how *precious* soever, to the procuring of it.

2. The spirits of men are exceeding prone to *boil over* in immoderate desires of Honour, and by *indirect* and sordid means to attempt it. when they are *defective* in those noble and *generous achievements* which may give them *right* to claim a propriety therein : so eager
and

and impetuous is this *thirst* after fame and glory, that if it be not found in *conjunction* with Vertue, to *direct* it to such *enterprises* as truly *ennoble* the undertakers, and to circumscribe it within its just bounds & limits, it doth frequently *provoke* the minds of men to such *wild* and *exorbitant* actions in the chace and pursuance thereof, which contract the most real *infamy* and *reproach*, and speak the *narrowness* and *degeneracy*, not the *amplitude* and *excellency* of the Actors Souls. What else means the unbounded *ambition*, the savage *cruelty*, the perfidious *treachery*, the unjust *usurpations*, the violent *invasions*, the barbarous *depopulations*, with many other acts of the same *hellish complexion*, which by History and Experience we are too sadly assured of? What except an *insatiate thirst* of Glory, which could not be allayed with the *draught* of one World, could provoke the Youth of *Macedon* to weep because there was not another? What but an itch of Fame could intice an *Herostratus* to *sacrifice* the magnificent Structure of *Diana's Temple* to the bare mention of an execrable Name?

3. The Stoicks owned no other Honour for *current*, then that which had the *image* and *supercription* of *Vertue* stamp't upon it, accounting that *spurious* and *illegitimate* which was not the *issue* of a *vertuous* and *heroique* Soul, disdaining to lay the *foundation* of so great an excellency upon the *wheel* of Fortune, or the *uncertain blasts* of Vulgar breath, but upon so firm a *basis* as was sufficient to support it without being beholden to *external appendices*, and could maintain its luster and oriency in the want of those *splendid additaments*, which those that are destitute of all *true* and real *glory* *pride* themselves in, as essentially requisite to the constituting of Honour, affirming Vertue not only to be its own *Reward*, but also its *Herald* too, *proclaiming* him that is *vertuous* most *glorious* and *honourable*: whereas the most *illustrious* Titles, when they are not accompanied with those *innobling imbellishments* which are proportionable unto them, are *evidences* of *vain-glory* and *arrogance* in those which *assume* them; of *misprision* and *ignorance* in those which *attribute* them, and confer no real worth

worth and value upon such which pass under those illustrious appellations. This Aphorism is registred among the wise sayings of the Jewish Fathers, in *Pirke Avoth*, אין ב' חורין אלה מי שעוסק בחורה That the study of the Law doth magnifie a man and make him honourable.

4. Desert is the soul of Honour ; the true stamp of Nobility is upon the *Mind* of Man. Religion puts a *luster* and glory upon the *spirits* of men , advanceth them unto the highest dignity that they are capable of: *The Righteous is more excellent then his Neighbour* , of a more worthy extraction and descent ; he participates of a *Divine* Nature, may claim kindred with God himself : what the Poet saith of *Aeneas* , is verified of him , *Contingit sanguine cælum* : he is *neerly allyed* unto *Heaven* , an high-born Prince, being as St. *John* tells us, *born from above* : the *Blood-royal* of *Heaven* runs in every Christians veins ; as is *Christ*, so are they, each one resembling the Child of a King: with a little *variation*, but with the same *amazement* and affection may the words of the beloved Apostle be

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applied unto this present Theme, 1 John 3. 1. *Behold, what manner of honour is this the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God*: which privilege is not merely titular, & *magni nominis umbra*, but imports some real and essential dignity communicated unto those upon whom this *ἐξουσία* is conferred, as the same Apostle styles it, *Joh. 1. 12.*

5. Whatsoever doth any way contribute to the rendring men famous and honourable, is in holy Writ eminently ascribed unto good and religious persons: *Dark Wisdom make the face to shine, and Understanding give preheminance? A Good Man is wise as an Angel of God; To fear the Lord, that is Wisdom; and to depart from evil is Understanding*: What greater wisdom then to secure an Eternal state of Blessedness? What more excellent knowledge then that of the best of Beings? with this noble Spirit is every holy man indued; he is conversant with the most glorious and ravishing objects, knows the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, and lays up a good foundation against the

the time to come, that he may lay hold upon Eternal life.

6. Doth Power, and Victory, the Throne and triumphant Chariot, challenge the highest attributions of Honour among men? Of him that is religious it may be truly proclaimed, he is a greater then Alexander, a stronger then Sampson. If Saul hath slain his thousands, David hath slain his ten thousands: Where shall we find such fortitude and magnanimity as predominates in a Christian? A power over all violent transports of the Mind, and impetuous desires of the Sensitive Appetite, is a victory transcending the conquests of the most puissant Monarchs of the World. Fortior est qui se quam qui fortissima vincit mania. Those whose names have swell'd to the utmost, have been streightened by Ambition, and wanted elbow-room in the world; their Victories have been characters of their servitude, and their Trophies badges of captivity. A stult infelix angusto limite mundi, is true of the mightiest them of all. The Hebrews have a Maxime, that he is a man indeed that masters his own appetite,

הַכּוֹבֵשׁ Who the Champion? מִי גִבּוֹר he which subdues his concupiscence. None but a Christian can write himself the *Conquerour of the World*, 1 *Joh.* 5. 4. His שִׁיר הַנִּגְוָה, or *triumphant Song* is in no danger of a *Palinodium*, 'tis set for Eternity; he is more then Conquerour: and who may triumph, if not he who doth *καταπαύει*, over-overcome, *Rom.* 8. 37.

7. Wisdom and Power by which men are rendred so conspicuous and glorious, when found in company with Goodness, make them truly Noble and Honourable; but when separate and abstracted from it, give them a name and nature resembling that of the Prince of Darkness, whose wit and power do concur to make him most infamously famous. The light of Nature hath discovered in the most perfect and glorious Being, infinite Wisdom and Power joyned with as *unlimited Goodness*. Hence in the Writings of the Ancients, we frequently find *Deus optimus maximus*. When *Moses* desired to have a view of the glory of the Deity, God tellshim, he will cause his *goodness* to pass before him; as if that
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were the only *beauty* and luster of his Nature. The renowned *Stagirite* acknowledgeth, that to be good, and do good, is the greatest honour. Though the wild Gallants account the name of *Good-man* a *diminutive* Title, yet the greatest Potentates have to the rest of their Title super-added *Despotic*, which is of the same signification and importance.

8. There is in sin that *turpitude* which makes its *Profelytes* asham'd to *patronize* it; 'tis this that makes the countenance of man to fall: such that *shame* and *ignominy* which is annexed to it, that no body will own it but by another name; the proud man scorns any other *Epithet* but that of *magnanimous*; and the prodigal then that of *free* and *generous*: The Miser will have his *sordidness* interpreted *frugality*; contention and revenge shroud themselves under *right* and *justice*; and any worse name than a good companion, is displeasing to the *indebted* debauch; fraudulent *circumvention* usurps the title of *Wisdom*, and the most flagitious sinners baptize their sins with the name of *Verue*, to make

them less odious to themselves and others: the *Prince of Darknes* acts in disguise, transforming himself into an *Angel of Light*, and inticeth sinners to the *perpetration* of the most horrid villanies under the *appearance* of the greatest good.

9. The holy Scripture representeth sin under such *averting forms*, as may beget in us the highest *shame* of it and *indignation* against it. It hath *supplanted* us and *rob'd* us of our *birth-right*, and *laid our honour in the dust*. The state of Innocence was a state of dignity; by the first *transgression* the right *Adam* had to honour was *forfeit*; and he became at once *obnoxious* to *shame* and *sorrow*. Sin hath *stain'd* the *purity* and *brightness* of our natures, debased and *metamorphos'd* rational creatures into another kind: to express this great degeneracy, the Holy Ghost styles wicked men *Kipers*, *Dogs*, *Wolves*, *Swine*, and *Children of the Devil*; chargeth them with the greatest *ignorance*, *folly*, *ingratitude*, and *dis-ingenuity*, and with whatsoever is unbecoming a reasonable and well-natur'd creature; as to *hate God*, to *love death*, to *despise a mans*

own soul ; mentions them as being *fascinated, distracted, insatuated.*

10. Religion restores the Soul to the dignity of its first Creation , by *accomplishing* it with those *virtuous habits* and excellent dispositions which were the *glory* of *man* before his *lapsed state* ; this happiness doth , most what , attend virtuous men , that *their actions* have the *approbation* of their *enemies* , there not being many so *insensible* of the difference between *good* and *evil* , as not *secretly* at least to *acknowledge* those which are truly religious worthy of honour and esteem , yea , and imitation too ; and on the contrary , that those which are *vicious* and *debauched* , have a *real ignominy* and *reproach* inseparably cleaving to them , from which only *Repentance* and *Reformation* can be their *Vindicators*.

11. Such indeed is that vain and *desultory temper* of some persons , that we may justly take up the complaint of the Church , Lam. 4. 2. *The precious sons of Zion , comparable to fine Gold , how are they esteemed as earthen Pitchers , the work of the hands of the Potter !* in lieu of honouring them
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that fear the Lord, they slight and under-value them, making them the subject of their *scorn* and *insolent* humours, vilifying them with opprobrious and ignominious terms, accounting them the filth and off-scouring of the world, the *peysson*, and a *pest*, *λοιμὸν*, *Act. 24. 5.* of *humanity*, unworthy of all civil society and natural accommodations: But all that contumely and reproach by which such men endeavour to render such men *ridiculous* or *odious*, *derogates* nothing from their true worth and honour, which can be no more *disparaged* by those *calumnies* wherewith it is *asperseed*, then those *eminent Constellations* in the Heavens which contain so many glorious Stars, are *obscured* by the *fictitious impositions* of *Bear*, *Scorpion*, *Dog*, *Serpent*, &c. Honour is alwayes secured in the company of *Vertue*. And although for a time good men do *lie among the Pots*, and may be sullied with scandalous imputations, the time is at hand when they shall *come forth* and appear *glorious as a Dove*, whose *wings are covered with silver*, and her *feathers with yellow gold*, to borrow the lan-

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guage of the Psalmist, *Psal. 68. 13.*

12. *Sith true Religion is essential Honour,* the prosecution of it is not a *design unworthy* the most *heroique and generous spirits*; The *King of Heaven* is the *Fountain of Honour*, and 'tis derived from him upon all his *favourites* in such a measure as may *gratifie the height of ambition*, ('tis beyond our thoughts to tell you, what his dignity shall be whom this King will honour) when you read in holy Writ of a *Crown*, a *Throne*, a *Diadem*, a *Scepter*, and all *royal habiliments*, and *triumphant magnificence*, secured by the Promise of God unto his Servants, it should quicken you to the performance of such religious and vertuous actions, as may render you worthy of that honourable entertainment with which the bounty of God will bless his people.

13. I would have none *honour himself* with the *name of Man*, that *scorns* those *accomplishments* which are the *glory of Humane Nature*, yea, and of the *Divine* also; God having emphatically spoken of Holiness as his greatest glory, *Exod. 15. 11.* To set *goodness at naught* is to spit in our

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own own faces, and to *lay* out *honour* in the *dust*. He that can *sport* and *caress* himself either in the Publique contempt, or fly and secret derision of what is indeed *religious Vertue*, let him pass for as *acute* a *Wit*, or *worshipful Gallant* as he will in his own account, he doth but reproach his Being, speaks evil of his Dignity, is ashamed of his Glory, and proclaims his folly: and thus did not those which pass for Heroes and Worthies in the *Annals* of *Ages*, as well *Humane* as *Divine*. At *Athens* the Temple of *Vertue* was to be passed through to that of *Honour*.

*Virtue and Honour have such sympathie,
If Vertue wither, Honour too will die.*

I shall conclude this Chapter with a passage out of a person *honourable* upon all accounts, *R. B.* Fame is a blessing only in relation to the qualities and persons that give it: Since otherwise the tormented Prince of Devils himself were as happy as he is miserable; and famousness unattended with endearing causes, is a quality so

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undesirable, that even infamy and folly can confer it; As *Momus* is little less talk'd of then *Homer*; the unjust *Pilate* more famous then *Aristides* the just; and *Barabbas* his name signally recorded in Scripture, whereas the penitent Thief is left unmentioned.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

1. *The censure of the Wise Man of the vanity of Worldly Pleasures.*
2. *Religion the Mother of solid and unspeakable Joy.*
3. *'Tis relished by those whose Palats are not distempered.*
4. *A Christians Pleasures crystalline and defecate.*
5. *The degeneracy of Humane Nature apparent in their choice of delectable objects.*
6. *These lower pleasures dispirit the Mind.*
7. *The opinion of Religions begitting Melancholy censured.*
8. *The Experience of Good Men to the contrary to be credited.*

1. **H**E whose experience qualified him with sufficient judgement, to discriminate between the precious and the vile, when he comes to pass a censure upon pleasures and indulgences of the meer animal life, saith of laughter it is mad, and of mirth, what doth it? and when he gives in his judgment of the ways of Wisdom, commends them to the sons of men as pleasantness and peace. Prov. 3. 17. *Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*

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Replete with such *pleasures* as exceed the *Senses*, and such *peace* as passeth the *Understanding*. Here we have one of the *first-born* of *Wisdoms* children, rising up, and calling her *blessed*. If you would know how *emphatical* and *pregnant* the expressions here used, are to *illustrate* and *advance* the excellency of Religion, you may learn it from any *Commentator*: I shall only suggest this consideration, that by *Peace*, which the *Hebrews* made use of in their *Salutations*, is so to be understood according to their *idiome*, the *confluence* of all manner of *blessings*; the *three* common *salutations* of the *Greeks*, χαίρειν, εὐχαίρειν, εὐχαρίσταν, being but *equivalent* to this one which doth *summarily* comprise in it, *welfare* of *mind*, *healish* of *body*, and *success* of *affairs*.

2. My meditation is in this Chapter confined in particular to the *pleasure* and *delight* which *pious Souls* are partakers of in their *constant exercise* of those duties to which *Religion* doth *oblige* them. They are a *Canaan* flowing with *Milk* and *Honey*; an *emblem* and *epitome* of the *State* of *Heaven*, the *Presence Chamber* of the *King* of

of glory; they are fill'd with *fulnefs* of joy, and drink of the *River* of pleasure that is in the *Paradise* of God. Religion brings the Soul to *converse* with *objects* of so *glorious* a nature, that it is at once *transported* with *wonder* and *delight*. The thoughts of that exuberant *Love*, manifold *Wisdom*, and infinite *Power* which did *contrive* and *accomplish* the Redemption of Mankind, with those *blessed consequences*, which attend it *occupie* and *possess* the Souls of holy men; and that *clear apprehension* they have of, and *interest* in these Divine Truths fills their Souls with joy *unspeakable* and *full of glory*; under these *shadows* do they sit with *great delight*, and the fruit is pleasant to their *tast*, that I may borrow the expression of the Wise man in his *Song of Loves*.

3. There is a *vein* of pleasure runs through its whole *body*. To those Souls whose *faculties* are not *distemper'd*, nothing more *grateful* and *savoury* then the *things* of God; 'tis an *evidence* of a *diseased* and *corrupt* mind, to *nanseate* and *disgust* this heavenly *Man* a, and to *relish* the *Garlike* and

and *Onions of Egypt*. When God hath prepared a Table, and furnished it with an *Oleo* of all *high tastes compounded* together, to invite the sons of men thereto, it speaks a great measure of *degeneracy*, to *delight* to eat *husks* with the *Swine*, and in effect bid God keep his good things to himself. But those sacred *Viands*, which to a wicked mans *Palate* have no more taste then *the white of an Egge*, are to him which is truly religious, *sweeter then the Honey, or the Honey-combe*.

4. The *Pleasures* of holy men are founded upon those *objects* which make them rival the *Angels* in felicity; nay more, of the same nature with those, wherewith the *King of glory* entertains himself. That correspondence and harmony which there is between their *Minds*, and *Truth*, and *Goodness*, is the *Fountain* of all those pure and *crystalline pleasures* which they do enjoy. A strong sense of *Divine Love*, and firm persuasion of *Eternal Glory*, begets and propagates a *Christians joy*; 'tis of a more *sublime* and *exalted nature*, then are those *gross* and *corporeal* delights wherewith the *Senses*

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are affected; 'tis *depurated* and refined from all that earthly *ſæculency*, which is *incorporated* into the very *quintessence* of those pleasures which *material objects* do produce. The most *ravishing* and taking delights, which the world doth *prostitute* to them which are her greatest *favourites*, are *foul* and *fulsome*, and resolved into their *first principles*, will appear *fitter objects* for *disdain* than *desire*, and rather to be loathed than lov'd. What are all their pleasures, but the product of a *greedy* and *ravenous* desire, which *suppose* their Souls to *labour* under some *violent distempers*? they are but the *scratching* of an *Itch*, or the pleasure of *drinking* under the *scorchings* of a *Calenture*.

5. The *degeneracy* of Humane Nature appears in nothing more then in mens *profelyting* themselves to *brutish sensuality*, wherein the *Beasts* do indeed *out-vie* them, as being furnished with *greater exquisiteness* of Sense, for the entertainment of the *objects* of *Sensitive pleasure*. Yet how many are there which *sacrifice* their *Reason* to their *Appetite*, and *sink* themselves into a
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lower species; which place the *Beast* above the *Man*, and *quarry* upon no other prey, nor *pursue* the *chase* of any other game, then what may *gratifie* their *brutish Lusts*; which *live only* in *subserviency* to their *sensual Inclination*, and *subordinate* all their actions to the *interest* of the *Flesh*, and never *reflect* upon the *excellency* of their *Soul*, nor regard the *adorning* of it with those *virtuous habits* which will *qualifie* it for *Everlasting glory*? as if all *delectable* objects were *calculated* for the *meridian* of the *Body*, and *ingrossed* by the *Senses*; and the *Intellectual* parts had no objects agreeable to its *heavenly nature* to take a *complacency* in: such surely *pity* the condition of *Angels*, and *envy* the *felicity* of *Brutes*:

6. These *terrestrial pleasures* which *voluptuous Epicures* *indulge* themselves, *dispirit* and *enervate* their minds, (like the *Ivy*, eat out the heart of the *Oak*) *soften* them by degrees into the most *effeminate* and *degenerous* temper, and remove them the greatest distance from all noble and real delights. Divine joy doth *invigorate*

and ennoble the Soul and quicken it to an heroic generosness and activity; the joy of the Lord is its strength.

7. 'Tis an opinion no less false in it self, then pernicious in its effect, to the promotion of all true goodness, which hath so many Patrons in the world, viz. that Religion divorceth its Profelytes, from all pleasant enjoyments, and espouseth them to a melancholique and sullen spirit, when the era from which all true comfort bears date, is the commencement of a religious life. Instances are numerous, of them which have rioted in the variety of all worldly delights, and afterward devoted themselves to the practice of Christianity, who have upon the experience of both states, in fine concluded, that the gleanings of divine joy, are infinitely to be prefer'd to the whole vintage of worldly pleasures.

8. In other cases this Maxime passeth for a truth, That every man is to be believed in his own Art; and except all moral certainty be questioned out of the world, and the ultimate reason of all belief terminated in the Senses, and our assent to the most

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common and certain truths be *suspended*, until they give us *information*; I see no ground of *exception*, against the testimony of those religious and holy souls, which assert their frequent experience of many ravishing and satisfying pleasures to be enjoyed in the conscientious exercise of those duties to which Religion doth engage them: Or why any should miscall their heavenly *Sentiments* and *Impressions*, the *Chimera's* and *Enthusiastical Hallucinations* of an active and busie *Fancy*; as if Christians in this resembled the antient Philosophers, who have written much of the *Musick* of the *Sphears*, when they never heard any such *harmonious airs*; and spoke of the next World but as blind men do concerning this, without any certain assurance of the *variety* of those things which they do affirm. The invitation of Philip to Nathaniel, *Joh. 1. 46.* Come and see, when 'tis practically answer'd, is the most powerful charm, to disincant those who are prepossessed with such low and unworthy opinions of the ways of Wisdom, and in whose esteem the pleasing vanities

vanities of this world are of so high value. How jejune and unsatisfactory are all the keck-shaws of the world to him who hath tasted how gracious the Lord is? How dull and unaffecting all its Pageantry to him who hath seen how glorious? All the galliardise and treatments of it, makes no impression upon those seraphick minds whose tast of earthly things is lost by their prelibation of heavenly pleasures.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

1. *The weakness of all Sublunary Comforts argued.*
2. *Their lubricity and slipp'iness make them unworthy a Wise mans pursuit.*
3. *A Good man is satisfied from within, in the defect of outward supports.*
4. *Christianity gives some earnest of Happiness before it pays the total sum.*
5. *Comfort hath a necessary dependance on the faithful discharge of Duty.*
6. *The Impulses of the Spirit consonant to Scripture.*
7. *There is a present advantage accrews to the Religious.*
8. *Goodness and Happiness import the same thing.*
9. *Sin and Misery twisted into one thread.*
10. *Pleasure in its true notion our chiefest Happiness.*
11. *The Conclusion.*

1. **T**Here is an *intrinsique weakness* and *insufficiency* in these *terrene delights*, to *satisfie* the minds of men; they are too short for their vast desires to stretch themselves upon; they *thirst* in the *midst* of these *waters*, and are *scorched* under its *shadow*; their desires are real, but enjoyments *fictitious*; the *expectance* of *satisfaction* is *equally disappointed* in the *fruition* and *frustration* of their hopes:

when we come to *graspe* them, they are but *wind*; and to *embrace* them, they are but a *cloud*; they hang out a *fair bush* to invite men in, but their *wine's* too much *diluted* and *dispirited* to *refresh* and *allay* the violent and *thirsty desires* of those which turn in thither. They *never satisfy*, seldom *compound* for the *debits* they *promise*. The *largest* and *fairest volumes* of this worlds *enjoyments* end with a *Nonnulla desant*. How many are there which are *arrested* in the *midst* of their *pleasures* and *grandeur*, and fall like *Sacrifices* with their *Crowns on their heads*! Its *stately Galleries* lead to the *Chambers* of *death*; its *River of Pleasures* swallowed up in a *Mare mortuum*; its joy is an *Usher* to *regret* and *anxiety*; its *Comical Scenes* end in a *Tragical Catastrophe*.

2. These sublunary sensual pleasures, like *flowers*, *wither* in our *hands*, are *strangled* in the *birth*, and *perish* in *embracing*; make a little *blaze* and *vanish*, *salute* our *Senses* and take an *eternal farewell*, flow to us with tidings of an *ebbe*; they are *quærens ævæ* as the Father very well
express

exprest them, or as the Epigrammatist;
id est *is unfer*, of a very transient and slippery
 nature, subject to be eclipsed at the full;
 of so light a colour, that they fade and are
 sullied in the handling, and apt to be
 sowed by the least clap of Thunder: as soon
 as ever you put your hands into their
 sides you shall feel their hollownes. Divine
 Pleasures are much *enhanced* in their worth
 by their *permanence* and continuance, whilst
 all *mundane delights* are justly depreciated
 by their *inconsistence* and *lubricity*. That
 heavenly Herald that knew well enough
 how to *blazon* this Worlds Coat of Arms,
 tells us its made up of fading *Flowers* beset
 with *Crosses* and *Crosses*. The anointing of
 Kings with *oil* at their Coronations, inti-
 mates the *slipperiness* of their Thrones.
 Those things which have the most *durable*
nature are reputed *ceteris paribus*, most
 excellent; this puts a lustre and value upon
 divine *delights*, that they are not *obnoxious*
 to that *shortness* and *uncertainty* which is
 the *common fate* of all *mundane pleasures*,
 which justly rank them in that degree of
 beings which are but a remove from no-
 thing,

thing, and consequently unworthy to have the affections of a Soul *too strictly* engaged to them, which is *capable of Eternal Communion* with, and fruition of the first and Supreme Being.

3. The mind of a good man brings him in *constant revenue* of solid *peace* and satisfaction; he *holds* his Serenity by a better *Tenure* than the world can give: he is not *indebted* to the *plenty* of external enjoyments, for the *evenness* and *composedness* of his mind; nor doth his joy and *pleasure* depend upon the *curtesie* of the creature, but he enjoys *halsyon* days in the *greatest tempests*; to them the *Red buds* and becomes *pleasant*; he can *sing* with the *Thorn* at his *breast*; he accepts with *equal welcome* an adverse or prosperous condition, knowing the wisdom and goodness of that Providence, which doth appoint these circumstances of life: His *bones* are not subject to *aches* upon *change* of *weather*: His joy is so *securely treasured up*, that it cannot be *ravished* away by the hands of *violence*, but will run *parallel* with *Eternity*. Though holy men are not by any *special Charter*,
priviledg'd

priviledg'd from outward troubles, but are *involved* in the same *common calamities* with the worst of men, yet their *minds* are like the *upper Region*, calm and serene, and not disturbed with those *tempestuous storms* which arise in *guilty souls*, upon the approach of *misery*. Religion allays all the *perturbations* and *commotions* of the Soul, appeaseth all those *tumultuous riots* and *insurrections*, which mens *boisterous* and *unruly passions* are apt to raise; so that their minds are neither *molested* by any *inward contests* or *outward violence*, but enjoy *perpetual serenity*. In the bosome of a good man you may find the *Mare pacificum*.

4. Christian Religion hath not only this *peculiar advantage* above all other, that its design is to *repair the ruines of decayed Nature*, and at last to *readvance it* to that *primitive state of perfection* it was possessed of, before the *delinquency of rebellious Adam* had brought him *under sequestration*; but doth in the *interim communicate* such *blissful enjoyments* to its *Votaries*, as even *anticipate their desires* of
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of being in *Heaven*. It takes them up into the *Mount of Transfiguration*, and gives them a *Pisgah-sight* of their future Inheritance; brings them *clusters* of *Canaan's Grapes*, before their *actual* entrance upon the *purchased Possession*. It opens a *Casement* into the other Life, whereby holy men take a *view* of the *Kingdom of Heaven* and all the *glory* of it; it *feasts* them with the *hidden Manna*, *refresheth* them with the *water of life*, which *Antepast* of *Eternity* makes their joy greater than the joy of *Harvest*, or the joy of them which *divide the Spoil*: If their notion of *Heaven* be agreeable to the *nature* of it, which suppose it rather a *state* than a *place*, it is not incongruous to believe that *pious men* are in *Heaven* before their *dissolution*; they need not in the language of *Moses* and *St. Paul*, seek for one to *ascend up into Heaven*, to bring them comfort from above, nor *descend into the deep* to fetch it from below. No, it is not at such a *vast distance*, but it is near them, in their *mouth*, and in their *heart*. It is the *immediate issue* of *Conscience*, giving in evidence of a *sincere hearty compliance* with

with the *Divine Will*. This fills *their mouth with laughter, and their hearts with joy*.

5. I do not take *Comfort and Joy* to be such *arbitrary donatives* of Heaven, as to be *promiscuously scattered* with an *indifferent hand*, without respect to the *qualifications* of those persons unto whom they are *dispensed*; but rather suppose them the *natural and genuine product* of *vertuous actions*, according to that of the Prophet *Isaiah*, *The work of righteousness is peace, and the effect thereof quiet and assurance for ever*. A good *Conscience* and a merry *Heart* are *inseparable concomitants*. A Christian can give himself a *rational account* of all those comforts he partakes of; he saith not he shall have *peace* though he walk in the *imaginations of his own heart*, but expects and enjoys it in the faithful *discharge* of those *duties* he is engaged to by his *profession*.

6. There are no such *Jobacches* and *Dithyrambes* dictated by the holy Spirit, which offer violence to the faculties of the mind, and transport it into an *Ecstatical Paroxysm*; this *Fanatical spirit* prevailed much in the
Pagan

Pagan World ; and its *delusions* were embraced with the *same veneration* an *Oracle* could exact. All the *impressions* Christians can expect the *Spirit of God* shall make upon their minds , are to be agreeable to their *natures* , accountable to *Reason* , and consonant to the *sacred Scriptures* ; and this is not to limit the *Holy One of Israel* , or to chalk out a way for the *Holy Ghost* to move in his *Operations* , who is free to work where and when he pleaseth ; but may serve for a *caution* to *credulous minds* not to be *insnared* by the *Impostures* of those which pretend to *high degrees* of *Inspiration*.

7. All the felicity of *Religion* lies not in *reversion* ; good men stay not for all their *Happiness* till they come to *Heaven*. In the keeping *Gods Commandments* there is a *great reward* ; Christians gather in much of their *harvest* while they are *sowing their seed* ; their *bliss* and *comfort* is not wholly supported by *expectation* : there is a *present possession* of so much of *Heaven* as may *quicken endeavours* , *satisfie desires* , and *encourage hope*. They are not *adventurers* merely

meerly for a *peradventure*; but have *insurance* for *advantage*. What is that *present Revenue* of Joy which good men have imparted to them, but *Heaven Incarnate*? God *muzzles not the mouth of the Oxe which treadeth out his Corn*; None serve him for *nought*: Who ever complained of God as an *austere Master*, which had *experience* of his *service*, or can say, they had *nothing* for their *labour* but their *pains*? He that *forgoes* or *undergoes* any thing for Gods sake, and the Gospel, shall be *compensated* in this *life* an *hundred fold*, and in the world to come shall have *life Everlasting*. He may say as *St. Paul, Act. 27. 21. We have gained this loss*, of all the *damage* he *sustains* in his *passage Heaven-ward*; God gives *good measure, heaped up, pressed down, and running over*: Though we are to God *unprofitable servants*, yet is not *Gods service* *unprofitable* to us. If any demand, What *profit* is there by *Christianity*, and what *advantage* an *holy man* hath? I answer, as the *Apostle* in another case, *much every way*; *much more* then any one can imagine who is *estranged from the life of God*, and knows
not

not that sweet pleasure which is *twisted* into the very *Essence* of *virtuous* and *holy actions*.

8. *Goodness* and *Happiness* are but *distinct* notions of the *same* thing ; what is *Glory* and *Heaven* but *either* names given to *Grace* and *Vertue* ? for the *Essence* is the *same* ; and only a *gradual*, no *specific* difference between them. The Scripture hath baptized the *smallest* degrees of *Grace* with the name of *Glory*, *Isaiah* 60. 1. and the highest enjoyments of *Glory* with the name of *Grace*, *1 Pet.* 1. 13. *Hope to the end for the Grace that is brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ* ; that *Grace* is *glory inchoate*, and *grace* *glory consummate* ; that *grace* is *glory in the bud*, *glory* *grace in the flower*, &c. are expressions frequently made use of, to express the *similitude* and *difference* there is between *Goodness* and *Happiness*. An appeal to the general *experience* of mankind, who have had no *acquaintance* with the *Doctrine* of our Saviour, will make it evident, that the notions they entertain'd concerning *Vice* and *Vertue*, were *equivalent* unto them which

which are here suggested. *Plato* assures us that 'tis a Law enacted from Eternity in the great Consistory of Heaven, and for ever to be kept inviolate; *That Sin and Evil shall be attended with misery; that Vertue and Goodness shall be alwayes happy.* To cite what the Sentiments of *Seneca*, that great Moralist, concerning this subject are, would be to transcribe a great part of his Epistles, wherein he makes *Vertue* to be its own reward, and *Vices* to be the tormenters of such which act them; for every sin brings into the world a *liſtor* with it. TWO

9. A difference between Good and Evil, is ingraven in such indelible Characters upon the minds of all men, that the most profligate and obdurate sinner cannot totally excuſs them, nor sin himself into so deep a *Leſbargie*, as to be altogether insensible of the gripings of a guilty Conscience. The holy Tongue calls *Sin* and *Punishment* by the same name, as being in effect one and the same thing. Were there no other *Nemesis* to execute vengeance upon wicked men, then what ariseth from their reflection upon their *Impieties*, yet could they not

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escape

escape a severe punishment, having their
 own Consciences appointed to be their Tor-
 mentors. Every sinner is a *Megara* to
 himself; there is a *bosome* fury that pursues
 a sinner, with such suggestions of guilt
 and wrath, as beget in it present horror,
 amazement and perplexity; and dreadful
 apprehensions of a future judgment: Sin
 and misery are twisted into the same thread;
 the vails of sin is shame and sorrow, the
 wages death. A sinner is *felo de se*; not
 only an accessory, but the principal in his
 own ruine; many an one persecutes him-
 self to death by Envy, Malice, Revenge,
 and becomes the Martyr of his Lusts.
 Whence come those wars and fightings,
 those violent perturbations and anxious con-
 ceits which disconcert the minds of wick-
 ed men? come they not from their lusts?
 they are the effect of Pride, Self-love, and
 Malice; they are the Incendrarics which fo-
 ment divisions, and dispossess the mind of
 its calmness and peace: the web that en-
 tangles men is spun out of their own bowels;
 Death and Hell are to be accounted the
 creature of sin, that is the womb that bears
 them,

them, and the *paps* that give them suck; by this the Prince of Darknels supports his Kingdom. This kindles the *devouring fire*, and prepares fuel for everlasting burnings. To sin, is to *anticipate eternal death*, and to be *damned* before one comes to *Hell*, and *act over aforehand* the Tragedie of their own destruction, and to *torment themselves before the time*. As God in his gracious Providence doth not leave holy *persons* to grapple with the *difficulties* of the *Divine Life*, without some *Prelibations* of that Happiness to which it doth conduct them, for their *encouragement* to a continual *progression* and advancement in Piety: So neither doth he leave the wicked to an *uninterrupted tranquillity* in the course of their sins, but *imbitters* their pleasures, by the *secret Convulsions* of their own Consciences, and by a dreadful *presensation* of future misery, that by these sad *presages* they may be excited to *flee from the wrath to come*, through the *abbarrence* of that which is its immediate and necessary cause.

10. The *Epi. means* did not err in their

Philosophical determination of Pleasure, its being the *chiefest good*, the *Alpha* and *Omega* of Happiness; for if we have a right notion of it, (and are not imposed upon by that *meretricious, treacherous and serpentine* pleasure, which is ever attempting to insinuate it self into the affection of our *masculine faculties*) we ought to *court* it and *imbrace* it where ever we can meet it; but because we have *misapprehensions* of its nature and objects, therefore we hunt upon a wrong sent, are apt to catch at every shadow, and *seek the living among the dead*, vainly expecting to enjoy a *satisfying* pleasure separate from that goodness which is *essential* thereunto. *Epicurus* himself tells us, though a supposed Enemy to a *vertuous temperance*, Οὐκ ἔστιν ἡδὺς τῆν ἀνὴρ τῷ σφοδρίῳ καὶ καλῷ. Wisdom and Goodness are necessary concomitants of Pleasure; which make me prone to believe, that those which exploded his *Atomical Hypothesis*, and were such bitter *Antagonists* to his *Natural Philosophy*, might be a little over-lavish when they describe his *Moral demeanour*, which though it might not be so

cynical

cynical and *morose* as that of some other Sects of Philosophers, yet was different enough from their *deportment*, who for their *sensual Indulgences*, in the vulgar language are named *Epitures*.

II. A strong desire after Pleasures is *radically fixed* in the nature of our being, we need no powerful motive to awaken us to inquire after it; for it is a *Principle* in our Souls, and our Propensions to it are *therefore strong*, because they are *natural*. The government and *direction* of this *connate Appetite*, hath been a Theme largely handled not only by *Theologists*, but *Philosophers*, and is the ultimate end to which their studies have pretended; all the circumstances of life which are *valuable*, are therefore so because they are *delectable*: 'tis the *Pleasure* men take in their Friends and Relations, in their Wealth, in their Honours, which engageth their *affections* to them; if that be not the *result*, they are no way *bettered* by fruition of them. Was I now disposed to be accurate and exact, in the drawing of particular Inferences from those various branches, which the foregoing notions of

Pleasure yield, I should transgress that law of brevity, which I have for the prevention of complaints of being too prolix and tedious, prescribed my self; as also in part hinder what I endeavour to promote, *viz.* the Readers care to supply what is *deficient* by his own considerations; to which end, I shall insert out of a deserving *Poet*, that which may engage him to this practice.

*Who readerth much, and never meditates,
Is like a greedy eater of sweet Cates,
And doth his stomach so surcharge with food,
That commonly they do him little good.*

But that which in general I shall suggest, is this; That whosoever shall be prevail'd upon, by any of those arguments this Treatise affords, to abandon any *vicious* practice, and renounce the *Works of Darkness*; to live in the exercise of *Virtue*, and an *intire consecration* of himself to the Service of God, if he find not the *harmony* and
pleasure

pleasure of his Soul , when in the state of *Righteousness* , abundantly *surpassing* those *lower* delights administred to the meer *animal life* , I shall give him leave to curse me for an *Impostor* upon his *first repentance*.

CHAP. VII.

1. *Christian Religion propounded by our Saviour as an easie yoke.*
2. *It doth not contain any thing prejudicial to the Body or the Mind of Man.*
3. *The Difficulties wherewith 'tis charged, are for the most part fictitious.*
4. *Wisdom is justifi'd of her Children.*
5. *Ignorance a great promoter of Irreligion.*
6. *Experience advanceth Piety.*
7. *The Important matters of Religion are obvious to the meanest of them which inquire after it.*
8. *The Doctrine of the Gospel abused by false Suppositions.*
9. *Christian Religion best known by Tryal.*
10. *The Duties and Vertues of it every way more grateful then the opposite Vices.*

1. **A**mong those many motives which our blessed Lord did frequently insist upon, to bring men so much *in love with themselves*, as those were with whom he did converse, to *espouse* a Doctrine which engaged them to the practice of such Duties which at first sight seemed *contradictory* to the design and scope whereunto their present Inclinations carried them; he propounds

propounds it to them as *consistent* with their *present Interest*, and containing in it nothing repugnant to the common Sentiments of Humane Nature, his *yoak* being *easy*, and his *burden light*. 'Tis such a yoak which is lined through with a *downie softness*, and doth not *press*, but *ease* those which take it upon them. 'Tis a *burden*, yet 'tis no Solocism to say 'tis *light*; its *Onus alarum*: Let the *ballace* rather be accounted the *remora* of the Ship, which it secures, then the burden which our Master imposes be thought heavy, to the shoulders where it lies in its greatest weight.

2. Were Christianity attended upon with a *numerous retinue* of Incumbrances, which would disturb and unsettle the *peaceable* and *harmonious* temper and constitution of the Mind, the *neglecters* of it might with some *colourable pretence* of reason, *attempt* to *justify* their refusal, to subject themselves to the rigorous and severe injunctions of that which would so much *retrench* that liberty and serenity about which they are so *highly solicitous*.

But

But Religion comes not to *prey* upon our Peace, to *disseise* us of our Rights, to *invade* our Priviledges, to *betray* us to servility, or ingulf us into a state of trouble and inquietude; or engage us unto so *cruel* a *Discipline* as *Superstition* hath instituted in the *Pagan* and *Christian* world for its *Profelytes* to submit to. There is nothing contained in it which offers any violence to the faculties of the Mind, or can be rightly interpreted to the *prejudice* of the Body.

3. There are no such *insuperable difficulties* and *inaccessible Alpes* in the way to Heaven, as the *supine negligence* of some suggests unto them, who have made the most impossible tasks to be emblemes of the Gospel Precepts, and cry out the *burden of the Lord*, the *burden of the Lord*, though they do not so much as touch it with one of their fingers. The *Lion* in this way is not so *fierce* as he is *painted*; there are no such dreadful Apparitions, no such *horrid Spectres* and affrighting *Mormoes* as are *conjur'd* up by the power of a *deluded* Imagination; the difficulties which occur,

are

are not half so great as they are represented to be by them which look at the wrong end of the Perspective. These sons of *Anak* are not so formidable as Supposition makes them: The story of those great Giants is a *Romantick* Fiction: These *fiery Drrgons* that watch the Garden of the *Hesperides* are nowhere but in a Poetique Fable. Those *Centaur*s, &c. which are so terrible, are the *Chimera*'s of a teeming Fañcy, and have no other being then what misapprehension doth confer upon them. Men do first draw the *Picture* of Religion with a sad and *lowring Countenance*, and then take occasion to *dislike* it; *disguise* it with *uncouth notions*, and so keep themselves at a distance from it, and are terrified with a *Vizard* of their own putting on. They cast a *Mantle* of *Darkness* upon the *face* of *Light*, and represent Religion to themselves in the most *averting form*; and no wonder if they be no otherwise *affected* with it; they conclude there are many hardships to be undergone, and great opposition to be overcome, and so give themselves a *Writ of Ease* from the pursuance of it, without any further inquiry

inquiry into the nature of it, making an *excuse* of their own *slanders* and jealousies: doubtless such which *criminate* Religion as uneasy, and except against it as harsh and rigorous, are such as never give themselves the trouble to *justify* or *condemn* their fears, by experiencing whether they were true or false; but pass a severe sentence upon it, without any other evidence than the testimony of its greatest Adversary, and their degenerate Nature suborned by him; never appealing to their own *Reason*, nor putting it to a *trial* of *Sense*, either of which would answer their Objections, silence their clamours, confute their fears, and *vindicate* Religion from that *sourness* and *moroseness* of which it is *impeached*, and make its *unjust Judges* become *powerful Advocates* to plead its easiness, pleasantness and desirableness.

4. 'Tis mens want of acquaintance with Religion deceives them into a misbelief concerning the conversable and acceptable nature of it; to all that know it, it appears very aimable and attractive; 'tis mens *Ignorance* of it is the Mother of
their

their want of devotion to it. The meaning of the matchless *Spencer* is apparent, in making *Ignaro* Porter to the Castle of the Impostureless *Duessa*. *Wisdom* is justified of all her Children, they rise up and call her blessed; Let the *Brats* of *Folly* and *Darkness* calumniate never so strongly, when men take no other view of Religion than what they have through the *Devils Opticks*, 'tis no news to hear them speak of it as difficult, and decline the pursuit of it as not worth their while; but to him that hath seen it in its native excellency and beauty, and understands the worth and importance of it, the greatest labour employed about it, is a kind of recreative divertisement, and nothing that conduceth to it esteemed a difficulty.

5. What except *Ignorance* and *Oscitancy* could infuse into mens minds, such pernicious prejudices concerning Virtue and Piety, as is too apparent in the fatal consequences? What other causes can be assigned of that *Irreligion* and *Immorality*, which is so *Epidemical*, if these be denyed? What else could beget such practical Contradictions

traditions in reasonable creatures, and make them *Antipodes* to themselves? How passionately do men *languish* and *suspire* after life, yet how *importunately* do they *court* the *embraces* of death? At how *great a value* do men pretend they prize the blessings of Eternity, and the Happiness of the World to come, yet sell them at the *vilest rate*, and exchange their Salvation for a *Fenny*? What *kindness* do men profess they have to their Souls, and how *solicitous* will they seem to be to procure their welfare, when in the mean time they will *forfeit* all their happiness to *gratifie* a sensual desire, and expose them to *eternal* misery for a *moment* of pleasure? Speak with most men, they will tell us, the end of their being here is to glorifie and enjoy God, and prepare themselves for an Inheritance in the future life, when all their actions proclaim them wholly immerst in this present world: and all their designs levell'd at these sublunary vanities; as if *their houses should continue for ever, and their dwelling place unto all generations.* How unbecoming these contradictions are
those

those active intellectual and generous powers of their Souls, the labour of reflection will inform them.

6. Did men enquire into, and make experience of the blessings of Religion, and lay aside those *prejudices* wherewith their *ignorance* and idleness hath *prepossessed* them, touching its trouble and difficulty, we should find the *foundation* which supports the *Kingdom* of *Darkness* razed, and the tents of wickedness made desolate in a moment. Religion looks upon us with a *serene* and *pleasant Aspect*; engageth us to cope with no power so great, as *threatens* a *despair* of *Victory*; puts us upon no *task* which shall *frustrate* sedulous endeavours; it gives assistance proportionable to its commands; and allows *straw* enough to make the number of *Bricks* it exacts from us.

7. The *Fundamental* Truths of Christian Religion are *easie* and *intelligible*, and its most *important Duties* *feasible*; acquaintance with *Philosophical Distinctions*, *Scholastical Notions*, thin and airy *Speculations* are not *Essential* to a Christian; a little
Theory

Theory is a sufficient *Basis* to raise a large Structure of Piety upon. Religion, as *Erasmus* complains, is become now *res ingenuosa*; as if it were intended more for to *exercise* our wits then *regulate* our lives; and were rather to scratch mens Itch of Disputation, then advance true Devotion, and to furnish them with *Discourse*, and not better their *Converse*: But the Doctrine of our Saviour is designed to more noble and glorious ends; 'tis to *insinuate* an *heavenly nature* into the minds of men, and effectually to *ingratiate* the Precepts of Virtue, and to *propagate* Goodness in the World; and those *previous* dispositions which are indispensably necessary for the minds of men to be qualified with, for the entertainment of this sacred Doctrine, are not a *large stock* of humane learning and natural abilities, but an *humble* and *pacate* composure of soul.

8. The *superficies* of the Gospel, at first sight presents us with so much Truth as is needful to *usher* in Vertue, though we should never dig into the bowels of this golden Mine, and find out those rich treasures

fures which are hidden there. We do much
 abuse our selves and injure the Doctrine of
 our Salvation, by framing such *Idea's* of it,
 as are no way *correspondent* to the nature
 of it, *viz.* supposing it to be *folded* up in
 some *inexplicable* mysteries, and shadowed
 over with *clouds* of thick Darknes, or
sublimated into such thin and *volatile* no-
 tions, as are too *subtil* for the ken of
 Vulgar Understandings: Whereas the wise
Legislator of the Gospel, (pardon the
 Solæcism) hath *promulgated* it in so con-
 descending a manner, that the meanest of
 those who are concerned in it, may be
 soon *Doctors*, of what doth immediately
 relate to their *Obedience*. Who is so *Idio-
 tical* as to *ignore* the meaning of these and
 the like most necessary and important
 truths, *Without faith it is impossible to
 please God; Without holiness no man shall
 see the Lord: That God hath shewed thee
 O man what is good; and what doth the
 Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and
 to love mercy, and walk humbly with thy
 God, &c.* All the Principal and Fundamen-
 tal Truths of Religion are writ in so fair a
 G character,

character, that *he that runs may read them*, and he that reads may *understand* them. God speaks not to us in the *language* of *Eternity*, but as the *Hebrews* frequently express it, כְּלָשׁוֹן בְּנֵי אָדָם with the *tongue of the sons of men*; he hath graciously *accommodated* his speeches to the *lowest capacities*, fitted truths of Scripture to the lowest understandings: We need not go to a *Seer* to enquire what its most important expressions signify, they shine so *clearly* in their own *light*: The *Oracles* of God speak not *ambiguously* as the Pagan Oracles, whose sayings might be interpreted to contrary senses; and those which *consulted* them left in *suspence* to which construction they should give credit, till oftentimes the *fatal events* decided it. As the *conspicuous* and eminently apparent Stars are sufficient to *direct* the Mariner which way he is to steer his course, though many of the lesser magnitude cannot be discerned without the advantage of a *Telescope*; so those blessed Truths which are necessary for the *government* and regulating of our actions, are clear and *visible* to a
dim

dim eye, though there be some *collateral* Truths, which are not so neerly allied unto Piety, intimated in the Gospel, which are δυσνόητα, hard to be understood, and fall not under the *cognisance* of every ordinary Intellect, but, may be, prove *too hard* for the greatest *Linguist*, *Critick*, or *Scholastick*, to satisfy himself, or others in, as might be evidenced by many Instances, were it not a digression.

9. The Truths of Christianity are rather adapted to *Sensation* then *Speculation*; our *Sentient faculties* do acquaint us with more of the nature of true Religion, then our Noetical can arrive to; 'tis better understood by a *lively taste* and relish, then by any *artificial* description. The *manner* of the Gospel dispensation as well as its *design*, argues all those to whom it is *propounded*, to be *capable* of receiving the *benefits* promised in it, and discharging the *duty* required in order thereunto. Religious Duties were never yet found so perplext with difficulties as to defer any *Probationer* from becoming a *Votary*; Who ever espoused her sued out a *Bill of divorce*? Those Exercises to

which it doth engage us, are to *invigorate* and to quicken the Soul, and to *breath* out those noxious fumes, which are so apt to weaken and distemper it; and becomes a *sovereign Antidote* against those Diseases to which Idleness exposes it.

10. Let wicked men compare but those real difficulties wherewith the ways of sin are incumbred, with those imaginary ones which they have set in the way of Vertue, to affright themselves out of it, and they will upon the *audit* of the *account* soon renounce their present opinion; so *obvious* is it, that every *Vertue* is more facile and easie then its opposite *Vices*: What torment is their in *Love*? What trouble in the *concomitants* of Faith, *viz.* Joy and Peace? What *wrong* is their in forgiving an *Injury*, and forbearing *Revenge*? What *weight* in the *bearing* Evil with Patience? what *prejudice* is there sustained by *Moderation*? where doth *Humility* press, or Truth and Sincerity aggrieve? Doth Contentment disquiet and perplex? Do the gentle *Dove-like* breathings of the *blissed Spirit* raise storms and tempests? Doth the *hope* of Eternal Happiness

piness, *interrupt* pleasure and delight? Doth an *entire resignation* of a mans self, and all his concernments, to the *goodness* and *wisdom* of Gods Providence, and a peaceable *acquiescence* in his dispensations to him, betray to any inconveniences? what doth God *require* of us, or *do* unto us, which can give us any just cause, to complain of any hard *usage* or *cruel dealing*? which of his *Laws* could we desire should be *abrogated* and *repeal'd*, as burdensome and prejudicial?

G 3

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

1. *The Asperities of Christianity more eligible then Sensual Dissolutions.* 2. *An Induction of some Vices which are more difficult then the opposite Vertues.* 3. *There is a Moral power in Custom engageth men to sin.* 4. *The beginning of Religion is not ordinarily very grateful.* 5. *In its progress it appears easie and rational.* 6. *The Proleptical Notions of our minds attest its Equity and Necessity.* 7. *The principal parts of it, Faith and Love, consonant to our Natural Dictates.*

1. **T**He Devil as great a Liar as he is, did never yet *censure* the commands of *Meekness, Love, Temperance, Contentment, &c.* Every vertue hath that inseparable sweetness adhearing to it, which renders it not only *easie*, but also *pleasant*, and makes it not only *light*, but a *delight* to those noble & generous souls which live in the practice of it. The *denial* of our selves, the *susception* of the Cross, the *maceration* of the Flesh, the *renuntiation* of the World, which are the most irksome Duties, where-
with

with Christianity is charged , and carry in them the greatest *repugnancy* to the Inclinations of soft and *tender natures* , putting into the account that *intimate pleasure* which is *incorporated* into them , and that *constant serenity* which results from them , are rather pleasureable *divertisements* , then oppressing *employments* , and arguments of a *magnanimous* and heroick Soul , which hath subdued it self to the Divine will , and lives above the delights of Sense , pleasing it self more in serving the pleasure of the Almighty , then in the indulging its natural and vitious propensions ; so that even these reputed *severities* , and harsh *injunctions* , are infinitely more *eligible* , then the *rude-nesses* and *dissolutions* of a sensual life.

2. Every Vice labours under its own imperfections ; there is no sinful *habit* nor inordinate Passion , which puts not the minds of men , to undergo more *labour* and travel to *gratify* it , then is necessary for the *acquist* and exercise of a *vertuous* disposition . He that is of a malicious and envious temper , *makes himself miserable* , because he cannot make others so , and sucks *Poyson*

out of those *Flowers* wherewith others are adorned: when on the contrary, he which is possessed with a spirit of *universal love*, pleaseth himself in the prosperity of others, and in a sense *shares* of that *good* which they enjoy, and thus partakes of Happiness in common with the whole world: Intemperance makes men *nauseate* and *disgust* those pleasures they are so *ravenous* after; when *Moderation* in the use of lawful and natural pleasures, makes them *grateful* and desirable: *Covetousness* engageth its *Profelytes* to be *perpetually sacrificing* to a lust which cannot be satisfied, though all the Mines of *Peru* and Gold of *Ophir* were consecrated to it; but Contentment heals this *Bond-man*, and *charms* the Soul into a quiet *repose*, under those circumstances of affairs which Providence appoints; and he only that is thus satisfied, can boast himself a *Son of Wisdom*, which hath attained that *Elixir* turns all to Gold. Ambition 'tis a *rack* on which men *greedy* of applause *torture* themselves; their heads lie too high to sleep well, and their very *slumbers* are disturb'd by *dreams* of Honour; they look for rest in agitation,

agitation, and *Panther* like, leap at this poysonous *Aconite* till they burst. He that studies Revenge, and travels with the *accomplishment* of a mischievous purpose, if he frame not an *engine* which doth immediately *recoil* upon himself, shall certainly be molested by such future regret and anxieties, which will more then *preponderate* the sweetness of Revenge. How free from all such *solicitudes* are the spirits of those men which are of a *benign* and *obliging* disposition, and ready to gratifie and engage all men by an *affable* and *courteous* *demeanour* ! To instance in every particular grace and vertue, would be to prevent the Readers thoughts, which may readily furnish him with the same notions of those other vertues and vices which I have not suggested.

3. Were there not so great a *moral* power in Custom, and an averseness in men to the relinquishment of that to which they have been *habituated*, men could not *rebel* so much against the *Laws* of Reason, as to give themselves up to the *tyrannical* *Impositions* of their brutish lusts, considering the

the labour which they undergo in their acting of them, and pains they suffer after ; to this the Prophet refers, *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots ? then may you that are accustomed to evil learn to do well.*

4. It must be conceded, that true Religion is not easie *to flesh and blood*. Lust will be very *importunate* to be gratified ; there will be a *renitency* against Self-denial and Mortification ; the *old man* will be urging for his accost and fare ; the *Sensitive Appetite* will at first especially be solliciting to be indulged. The *strong man armed* will not presently quit his house, and *peaceably surrender* unto the *summons* of Religion ; there is need of a great power to beat him out of all his *Fortifications*. *Abraham* was unwilling, though the Father of the faithful, that the bond-woman and her son should be cast out. The *women* will be weeping for *Tammuz*. The right-hand cannot be cut off and cast away without some *reluctancy* ; yet men to prevent a *Gangrene* will condescend to *Amputation*. The method prescribed by the *Gospel Physician*, for the healing

healing the distempers of Humane Nature, engageth men to such a *diet* as is not *acceptable* to an Inordinate Appetite. The New-birth is not *accomplished* without some *throws*. The *Devil* will rage when *dispossess'd*. The *peccant humours* cannot be *evacuated* without some *gripings*; and the *corrosives* applyed to the proud flesh will occasion *smart*: " 'Tis some pain to rack
 " and fetch the flesh from of the *lees*, to ra-
 " rifie and *attenuate* the spirits *incrassate*
 " by vitious diet, as the learned Dr. Ham-
 " mond speaks. The whole *body of sin* can-
 " not be carried out to its *funeral* without
 " being *condoled* by the *brutish part*. When
 the old man *breaks up house*; there are
 many *retainers* to the *family* are loth to part,
 and will pretend a title from prescription.
 Those that have liked *Satans* service so well,
 as to have given him leave to *bore their ears*,
 its an argument of their approbation of it,
 will at first take it ill of them, which shall
 perswade them to change *their Master*,
 whom they so much delight in. And say of
Christ as those in the Gospel, *We will not*
have this man to reign over us. The dull
 Ass,

Als, as *Luther* styles corrupt Nature, cannot endure to be laden. Those *seditions* Lusts and Passions, which have so long bore sway in the minds of degenerate men, will be *molding Factions* and Combinations against the Sovereignty and Dominion of Reason and Religion, and 'twill be some difficulty to *repeal* every law of the members. The first *Scene* of this New-life appears *Tragical*, and there is an aptness to draw back upon the entrance into the Har-ness; before the *vitiating* Palat be restored to its proper *temperament*, it tastes no sweetness in the *hidden Manna*; the *Onions* and *Garlike* of *Egypt* are as savoury. Depraved Nature calls *Darkness* *Light*; and *Light* *Darkness*.

5. That there should be any *easiness* in the bearing that *yoke*, which is to *bridle* the wildness of an unruly Appetite, is a *Paradox* to all such which have not submitted to it; but a certain and known truth to all who have had *experience* of both *Estates*, and 'tis to stand or fall according to the *suffrage* of so competent Judges. Those who *converse* with true Religion most *familiarly*,

ly, do not complain of any burdensom tasks and uneasy services, 'tis a *weight* to them who are *weak* through sinful *infirmities*, and *painful* only to such who *labour* under their own *idleness*. 'Tis easie to the more noble part of Man; every way *correspondent* to those *powers* wherewith our rational Souls are endowed. 'Tis not *cooked* for a *vicious Palat*, or gratifie the unbounden *licorishness* of a *depraved* Appetite: 'Tis not to *treat* our *brutish* and inordinate desires, with those *varieties* which they affect; but 'tis to entertain our *angelick* faculties, with such *delicacies* as are agreeable to their spiritual nature. Nothing more easie and genuine to *sanctified Nature* and *undistorted Reason*, nor more satisfactory to the minds of men free from the Impositions of Lusts and Passions, then to worship their Creator, and endeavour to please him by an entire devotion of themselves to such actions as are consonant unto his holy Will. To give *honour to whom honour is due*, fear to whom fear, and to love our Benefactors, and them that love us, is currant coin all the world over; the *Publicans* the worst of men, did
thus;

thus; and to be deficient in this, is an argument of greater *sottishness* and *stupidity*, then is to be *found in Bruits*; for, *The Oxe knows his Owner, and the Ass his Masters crib.*

6. By the *renunciation* of Religion, men *recede* from the laws of their being, and walk in contradiction to their very natures: There are those *anticipations* in our minds, which do *attest* not only the *equity*, but the *necessity* of it too, in order to the attainment of the supreme good; so that if men offer no violence to their faculties, they will naturally conduct them to such apprehensions of the Divine *Wisdom, Power* and *Goodness*, as are proper to insinuate that *Affiance, Love* and *Reverence*, which if *regulated*, and improved according to *Gospel Revelation*, will be effectual through the grace of God, to bring men to everlasting Happiness.

7. Man as bad as he is, is not *so far degenerate*, as not to acknowledge the wayes of *Virtue*, in many respects more *advantagious*, and less *burdensom*, then those of *Vice*; to this the Heathen Moralists, *Epicurus,*

Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, &c. give in their testimony, and the Conscience of every man is a witness. Christian Religion, if we view it in the *Epitome*, viz. *Faith*, and *Love*, evinceth it's own excellency. What more *rational* then to give up our Understandings, to the *belief* of those Truths which challenge assent upon such *unquestionable evidence*? What more consonant to Humane Nature then to *love* that which is every way *amiable* and affecting? God because of his *absolute* Perfection and infinite Beauty, being *altogether lovely*, and because of his *relative* Goodness and constant Beneficence to us, he that loves not God for his *Excellency*, is less then a *Man*; he that loves him not for his *Kindness*, is worse then a *Beast*: If the *apprehensions* of his transcendent glory work not upon our *Reasons*; if the *sense* of his *bounty* and mercy work not upon our *ingenuity*, 'tis too infallible an argument that we live *Excommunicate* from our own *Natures*, and that our *demeanour* is inconsistent with those *Principles* which give us a *right* to the title of Humanity. Love
'tis

'tis part of that homage and quit-rent that we owe to him *in whom we live, and move and have our beings* ; and is it not fit that he which *plants a Vineyard* should eat of the fruit of it ? To love God is not so much a *duty* as privilege, *Salvation* and eternal glory consisting chiefly in the *consummation* of Divine Love ; and 'tis difficult to determine, whether he that is destitute of this blessed grace lies under greater *sin* or *punishment*.

C H A P.

CHAP. IX.

1. *An ardent desire after Happiness is intimate to our Natures.* 2. *The love of our Neighbour very congruous to our reasons and condition in this state of Mortality.* 3. *The excellency of the Law of our Saviour manifested.* 4. *The joy of one only conjectural to another.* 5. *The Gospel Precepts founded upon immutable Reason.* 6. *Gods indulgence to us in these Laws to be admired.*

1. **T**HE *Harmony of the Universe*, and the *Wisdom of the Creator* consists in this, that all kinds of things are endow-
ed with *such Natures and Principles* as may
accommodate them for the work to which
they are appointed; and in that they are
governed by such laws as are *suitable* to
the natures at first implanted in them. The
most universal Principle is *Self-preservation*;
in man a *rational agent*, 'tis accompanied
with a *strong desire* after a state of happi-
ness, and this *predominates* all others, which
eager appetite of good is so *intimately*
twisted into him, that he can as soon *divest*
H himself

himself of his being, as of his desire of being happy. *Self-love* proposeth happiness as the *last end* of Man, and he is under no *liberty* of suspending his desires thereunto, but doth so necessarily, and can do no otherwise, as is evident in all men, who eagerly chace that, in the attainment of which they *apprehend happiness* is to be enjoyed; and because they are not firmly convinced, that their chief felicity consisteth in the *favour of God*, therefore do they fall in love with *painted beauties*, grow fond of *appearances*, and court whatsoever hath the shadow and *semblance of good*, and are tost with the *vehement* motions of Love and Desire, through all the false glozing excellencies of this world, finding no object which can bear any *proportion* to their *indigence* and *necessities*. Whereas if they were certainly perswaded that this happiness which they are *solicitous* to procure, did consist in the fruition of *God alone*, they must as readily love and desire him, as hungry men eat, or the thirsty drink, and prefer him unto all things whatsoever may challenge a place in their affection; and

and to *direct* and set aright, not *eradicate*, this natural inclination, is the design of the Gospel.

2. As the Love of God contains nothing in it which carries not the greatest *congruity* to the understandings and minds of men; so neither doth that love of others which the Gospel enjoyns, include any thing which is not highly *rational*, *beneficial* and *agreeable* to the *ingenuity* of mankind, and can be dissatisfactory only to those which have exchanged the *nature* of *Man* for that of *Panther* and *Tyger*, and proclaim open war against their own *species*. That golden rule of our Saviours, *That whatsoever we would that men should do unto us, that we should do to them*, is to mind us to act in *pursuance* of those *Principles* which are deeply *radicated* in our Souls. Can it be called burdensom and unreasonable, to bear the same affection to another which I would have him bear to me? to put my soul in *his* souls stead, as *Job* speaks; to suppose my self under those circumstances which attend him, and *cloathing* my self with his condition, de-

mean my self towards him, as I should be heartily willing to be dealt withal, were the *scene changed*, and he in that state wherein I am; *exacting* no more of him then in such a case I my self would *allow*? considering that as he is in the world, so am I; that we participate of the same nature, that the *same blood* runs in *both our veins*, that we are *flesh of one anothers flesh*, and *bone of one anothers bone*, and have the same *relative obligations* to all acts of *courtesie* and *charity*, being of the same original and extraction, obnoxious to the same casualties, subject to the same passions, cloathed with the same infirmities, streightned by the same necessities, and capable of the same glorious felicity; What greater inducement can there be to love, then so much *likeness* and *similitude*?

3. Whatsoever *circumstances* can concur to make any *Laws effectual* and *acceptable*, take place in the *whole systeme* of the Gospel Precepts; the *indispensable necessity* of the things commanded, their *relative and intrinsecal goodness*, the *indisputable*

table right and sovereign authority of the *Legislator* to impose them; their *commendation* as *eligible* by such which have lived under the power of them; the *greatness* of that *reward* which is consequent upon the observance of them, and the *moderation* of the *rigour* of all penal Statutes by a *Court of Chancery*, candidly interpreting, and favourably accepting the sincere endeavours of all those which cordially apply themselves to the performance of them, without any *severe administrations* against any offenders, except them which by their own *obstinacy* render themselves *unable* of the grace and mercy which is offered therein.

4. To give an exact account with what pleasure and ease, *alacrity* and *activity* some *run the ways of Gods Commandments*, is beyond anothers power. Who knows what abundance of joy and strength may be communicated to holy men by the Divine Spirit? or how their Souls may be enlarged in their addresses to God! A *stranger intermeddles not with this joy*; nor can one acquainted with its nature know

its extent, and determine its measure. But to this every Saint subscribes his *Probatum est*, that *it is good for to draw near to God*, and that the *Introduction* to eternal blessedness, is more easie and satisfactory to vertuous and gracious souls, then are those *paths of carnal pleasure* which vain men so much delight in, that lead to the *chambers of death*. Though men may hear *much* of the easiness, and delightfulness of the yoke of Christ, yet the *half* of it cannot be told them, when they come to experience what the *gens* means, and find how gracious, benign, good and profitable a yoke it is, then will they cry out concerning it, as the Queen of *Sheba* did of the wisdom of *Solomon*, *The report that I have heard is true, but the one half of it was not declared to me*. Though men hear never so much of the excellency of Religion, their *experience* will acquaint them with more then *relation* can make out.

Three things I shall insist on, which much contribute towards the facilitating the commands of the Gospel. 1. Their Agreeableness to our Reasons. 2. The Assistance of the

the Spirit. 3. The Assurance of a Reward.

5. First, The Evangelical Precepts carry a *congruity* to our natures, are founded upon such immutable reasons as our Understandings can readily assent to; they have in them an *intrinsic* and *essential* goodness, and borrow not their obligation merely from their *injunction*, but are to be reckoned with those things which are commanded because they are good; not them which are good only because they are commanded; under the *Mosaical dispensation* God made greater use of his Sovereignty, the greatest number of those Laws being *Symbolical* and *Ceremonial*, having only a Positive goodness depending upon the command; they were not founded upon *natural reasons*, but were purely *arbitrary*; and the reason of them could be resolved only into the *Sovereign* will and pleasure of the Almighty, there being no *obligation* antecedent to the commands, the *matter* of the Precepts being destitute of any *real* and *internal* good, and had only such which was relative, and in order to some higher end. Hence the

greatest part of those Precepts are enforced by this reason, *I am the Lord*; intimating his Legislative Authority to be the ground of their Obedience. Besides those two *Positive* duties of Divine Institution, which considering the lapse of man, and the goodness of God, are accommodate to our necessities, the holy Sacraments: All the commands of the Gospel concern the *difference* of good and evil; they have their *foundation* in the *Nature* of God, and are *imitations* of the *Divine Perfections*, and have an innate tendency to the perfecting of our natures, the *equity* of them easily discerned, and their *accommodation* to their end readily apprehended. The matter of the Precepts recommends them to our observance; the Laws there prescribed, being founded upon such considerations as we are naturally affected withal; that which is thus consonant to the Principles of our nature, will be found more easie to be performed than those *positive* Laws which seem to be given only *pro imperio*. The first transgression was of such a command that was *meerly arbitrary*, whose goodness did depend

pend on the will of God ; not of a law commended from any natural reason.

6. Unless we will *abjure* our *humanity*, and call our selves by some other name then that of Man; we cannot complain of the yoke of Christ as burdensome and *oppressive*; 'tis by interpretation to *tax* the Almighty of *tyranny* and cruelty in requiring us to live conformable to our nature; which is no more then this, that we which are reasonable creatures should act according to the *dictates* of our *reasons*, and live up to the heighth of our beings, which is the *universal* notion and agreement of mankind. Whosoever will consult with his own soul, and attend to the *deliberate debates* thereof, concerning those terms upon which he stands in this life in relation to a future state, will admire and adore the *indulgence* and *benignity* of so gracious a Law-giver, in imposing no other *Laws* then those which have so much *agreeableness* to our natures, as to carry in themselves such weighty and forcible motives as are *effectual* to engage us to the observance of them, not only without
complaint

complaint and *reluctancy*, but also with an high measure of easiness and *complacency*. Upon this account the Apostle styles wicked men, *2 Thes.* 3. 2. ἀτοκοί, absurd and unreasonable, such whom no *Topicks* can prevail upon, and *Ephes.* 2. 2. υἱοὶ τῆ ἀπειθείας, sons of unperswasibleness, whom no reason can satisfy and convince.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

1. God nigh at hand in the assistance of his Spirit to all such which desire it.
2. He hath provided relief suitable to that infirmity our degenerate state hath brought upon us.
3. The difficulty supposed to be in Religion ariseth from our own deficiency.
4. Assurance of future Happiness animates the Soul to encounter any hazards.
5. Rational Agents encreases their strength proportionable to the consideration of their end.
6. Temptation to Sin not so strong, but encouragement to Vertue greater.
7. An happy end reconciles men to the love of the means which conduce to it, though otherwise abhorred.
8. Religion abstract from present and future pleasure would have few Profelytes.
9. 'Tis the nature of Hope to encourage men to desert little for the present in hope of a great reversion.
10. Our designing our own Happiness consistent with our making Gods Glory our chiefest end.
11. God useth

useth all rational methods to bring Man to Heaven. 12. Fear in its own nature apt to be effectual therewith. 13. The Promises of the Gospel appropriated to the various dispositions of men.

1. **S**Econdly, The assistance of the Spirit makes the commands, if a burden, easie to be born; God leaves nothing of himself forlorn and destitute, but cherisheth and aids it with the continual influences of his grace; *He doth not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, nor despise the day of small things*: His Power is always imploying it self in the promotion of Piety among the children of men. God is at hand to second any that set themselves in opposition to the Power of Darkness; and where he is the *reserve*, there is no *forlorn*. It was no haughty strain of arrogance in the Apostle St. Paul, speaking of himself, *πῶτα ἰσχύω*, Phil. 4. 13. *I am able for all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*; and the same Apostle Petitions for the same *almightiness* to be vouchsafed to the *Colossians*, Colos. 1. 12.

Strengthened

Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power. The Spirit of the Gospel is styl'd the *Spirit of Power*, and is always ready and able to help our infirmities; and when we are foil'd by temptations, 'tis not for want of power to oppose them with; 'tis not because the *weapons of our warfare are not mighty through God to prevail against them*; but because we betray our selves, cast away our armour, and deliver our glory into captivity, and our strength into the enemies hands. Wherefore should Man plead weakness, and charge all his sin upon the impotence of his nature? when God attends upon him with *sufficient grace*, and is never wanting to him which seriously seeks his assistance, but makes his *Power perfect* in mans greatest weakness. Men lie not under any *Physical* infirmity whereby they are disabled for the discharge of their duties; their *hands are not bound, nor are their feet put into fetters*; the perverseness and connumacy of their *wills* is the *only impediment* by which they are hindred from the performance of them; and how absurd and unreasonable is it for
men

men to complain that Christs burden's heavy, only because they have *no mind* to bear it?

2. This should awaken us to the most uncessant industry, to consider that our labours shall not be frustrated, nor our designs disappointed, through the *concurrent assistance* of the Deity: God hath mercifully provided for the children of men in their degenerate condition, against all those disadvantages which their *present* state exposeth them unto; and because we are liable to many miscarriages, by reason of the *darkness* of our *understandings*, which are apt to be deluded with false apprehensions, and absurd and inconsequent deductions, through the *propensity* of our *wills* to hearken to the suggestions of the flesh, and comply with the solicitations of the inferiour appetite; God hath not left us in the *hands of our own counsel*, nor set us to grapple with the enemies of our Salvation in the strength of an *arm of flesh*, but graciously co-operates by the assistances of his Spirit, that in his might we may prevail over all those spiritual fleshly
and

and *worldly lusts that war against our souls*, yea, be *more then conquerours* through his Almighty power, who never suspendeth the auxiliary concurrence of it from any which endeavour the propagation of Vertue and Religion, but is ever *working in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

3. Difficult and easie are *relative* terms, are nothing in themselves, but as they have respect to us, the difficulty and hardness of a thing being the *disproportion* between the *faculty* and the *object*; thus a little weight becomes a burden to an *infirm* person, and an easie question hard to him which is *illiterate*, when the one may be as easily carried by one which is strong, as the other be resolved by the one that is learned. Religion might pass not only for an impossible task, if the duties which it enjoyns us to perform were to be wrought by the strength of man, who cannot do any thing of himself, but as he is enabled by the grace of God; *qui jubet juvat*. The Leopard may *assoon change his spots*, and the *Aethiopian his hue*, as men of themselves change

change their natures, and *root out* those vicious habits which *custom* hath so deeply *riveted* into them. Therefore God chargeth nothing upon us as our duty for which he hath not afforded unto us a *proportionable* measure of ability, and unto the accomplishment whereof he hath not *engaged himself* by promise, if we do not offer violence to the grace of God, reject his counsel against our selves, and resist the holy Spirit which we are to *Petition* and *attend for*; so that notwithstanding many duties of Religion be accounted difficult by those which are *spectators only*, or be so in themselves, yet those which imploy themselves in the severest and irksomest part of it, have that assistance from an *unseen* hand which facilitates and sweetens their labours; *They walk and are not weary, they run and are not faint*; as their work, so their strength is increased; the more they do, the more they may; the *greater* the burden is which is laid upon them, the *better* they can bear it; and 'tis no wonder if neither a Christians Active or Passive Obedience subject him to faintness
or

or lassitude when the *ἐμπνεύματι*, *Phil. i. 19.*
the supply of the Spirit is so cordial and cor-
roborative.

4. Thirdly, The assurance of reward tends
to the facilitating the work of Religion;
That exceeding and eternal weight of
glory, which is in the Gospel propounded
to those which are truly religious, is an
inducement so connatural, and of so easy an
access unto the minds of men, and withal
of so weighty an importance, that who-
ever shall diligently poize it, will undoubt-
edly give in his suffrage to this truth,
that the well grounded expectation of fel-
city, so incomparably great, so eternally
durable, so shortly to be enjoyed, must more
then counter-balance all the asperities and
difficulties which incommode men in the
way unto it. 'Tis sufficient to make the
roughest places smooth, and level the highest
Mountains into a Plain, and make the
torrid Zone temperate; in the view of this
glory all difficulties are swallowed up, and
the edge of all dangers turned, and oppo-
sition is so far from being a bridle to re-
strain, that 'tis a spur to quicken endea-

your; it animates Resolution, inflames the Appetite, and improves the Soul to an *higher* degree of vigour and generousness, whilst it looks not so much at *the things which are seen which are temporal, as at the things which are not seen which are eternal.*

5. All Rational Agents are carried on by their ends, as Watches move according to the strength of the Spring, and Clocks proportionable to the weight which is hung upon them; by how much the more glorious and excellent the reward propounded and expected is, with so much the more *energy* and *virtue* is the mind of the agent possessed, and an answerable weight put upon the Soul for the accelerat^{ing} of its motion. Whatsoever a man proposeth as his end, he gives that an *Empire* and Dominion over him, to regulate and dispose his actions to the attainment of it; he who makes the eternal fruition of God his *ultimate* end, and liveth in expectance of it, is governed and swayed thereby, to be constant in the pursuance of it, notwithstanding the *means* which only can instate him in that felicity be very *irksome* and laborious.

6. There

6. There is no temptation to sin so strong, but the motives to Obedience are of far greater force and efficacy; the *encouragement* to Duty doth infinitely preponderate the *difficulty* of it; 'tis worth the while to *dive* for this *Pearl*, to *dig* for this *Treasure*, though they lie deep; this *Gold* cannot be *bought too dear*. What though thou shouldst prick thy fingers to gather the *Rose of Sharon*, and go over a craggy Mountain to find the *Lilly of the Valleys*? What if thou in the sweat of thy brows eatest of the *tree of life*? What if thou dost toy all the night, when thou art certain of so rich a *draught* in the *morning*? Who will not press with an holy violence to enter in at the straight gate, when as soon as he is in he beholds the *beatifical Vision*, and is befriended with a view of all the glory of the *new Jerusalem*? Let him that begins to be *weary of well doing*, or to *faint in his mind* in the prosecution of this happiness, lift up his eyes unto Heaven, and every glance of that glory will renew his strength, and refresh his spirits more then the touching of the earth did *Amias* in his fatal conflict with *Alcides*.

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7. God indeed values not the glory of his Kingdom at so cheap a rate, as to prostitute it to the enjoyment of every *supine* and idle wish, yet sets it not beyond the reach of diligent endeavours. Nothing can be justly esteemed difficult which conduceth to such an end; though there be an *averse-ness* and *reluctancy* in men to make use of those means which are effectual to the procuring so great felicity, yet doth the strength of their desires and expectations reconcile them to affect the means, which without consideration of the *end* they so much abhorre. In the most religious and refined Souls there is so much Humane Nature left, as would *recoil* and start back at the appearance of some Duties which sometimes Religion may exact, if they had not respect unto the *recompence* of reward, and fled for *refuge* unto the *hope* which is set before them. In all secular affairs men are encouraged by the expectation of achieving their end, to encounter with the greatest oppositions which contradict their designs. The Merchant adventures himself upon the mercy of a boulderous and unruly Element,

in hope of advancing his Estate. The Scholar with indefatigable industry pursues his studies, in expectance of having access unto those mysteries which are lockt up from vulgar understandings. The Souldier is not terrified by danger, but courts an Enemy to a battle in hope of being crown'd with spoil and triumph. By a Romanist even the scorching flames of *Purgatory* are cheerfully expected, as being introductory to the *Paradise* of Gods immediate presence, That far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, which is prepared for the reward of holy men, cannot to them that eye it, but make the *heaviest* burdens *light*, and *longest* pressures *momentary*.

8. 'Tis very probable that the practice of Vertue *abstracted* from all present pleasure, and future felicity; would be a *burden* wherewith few or none would charge themselves; therefore God hath graciously daigned to recommend unto us the duties of Christianity, under such inducements and motives that are most apt effectually to prevail upon us; his ways are so amiable and pleasant in *themselves*, that they may

invite us to walk in them, if there were no *other* happiness in the conclusion; and withal the *reward* which at last shall be conferred, is of such transcendent worth, that the *hope* of it is a sufficient incentive to engage us cheerfully to conflict with the sharpest difficulties can possibly occur in our pursuance of it, and as the blessed Apostle with the greatest earnestness and intention of soul presses toward the mark for the price of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ, being *steadfast and immovable*, always abounding more and more in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord; but that having our fruit unto holiness, we shall have the end, eternal life.

9. 'Tis the nature of Hope to strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees; to keep up the Soul amidst all storms, and make it impregnable against all assaults; to sweeten the bitterest potions, and lighten the heaviest burdens; the holy Scripture abounds in pregnant instances of the powerful influences of it; it provoked *Abraham* to relinquish his own Country,
and

and sojourn in a strange land, he looking for a City whose builder and maker was God. It prevail'd upon Moses to refuse the pleasures, honours and advantages of a Favourite at Court, and to accept of the servitude and misery which was undergone by the Israelites at the Kilne, for he had respect to the recompence of reward, and saw him that was invisible. The Primitive Christians welcomed the Plunders, and did not weep when they beheld the ruine and pillage of their temporal means, but took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves, that they had in Heaven a better and more enduring substance, and under torture would not accept of deliverance. Our blessed Lord and Saviour, unto whom we are to look as the most eminent instance and example, Heb. 12. 2. for the joy which was set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the shame, and suffered the contradiction of sinners.

10. 'Tis no indulgence to the infirmities of weak Believers, but necessary for the strongest Saints to encourage themselves against all difficulties by the consideration

of future glory. Nor is it any disparagement to the *ingenuity* and *generousness* of those Souls, whose obedience floweth from such a *Principle* as hath relation to themselves in the attainment of everlasting bliss, for that the desire of happiness is our *nature*, and the right expression of *self-love* our great duty; and such which censure that love of God *mercenary* and *meretricious*, which is in *conjunction* with the *love of our selves*, do not understand that we then make the glory of God our principal end, when we place our *chiefeft* happiness in the enjoyment of him; it being a vain thing to imagine we can glorifie God any *better way* then in the eternal fruition of him and communion with him; the *glory* of God being nothing contrary to, or abstracted from the *salvation* of man, but that in which it doth consist, and whereby it doth most effectually *display* it self. Nor can we be said to love *our selves* more then God, or subordinate his *glory* to our *designs*, in chiefly intending and endeavouring our own *happiness*, when this can only be accomplished by the denial of our sinful affections,

affections, and entire resignation of our selves to his Will, and the entertainment of those *Divine Impressions* upon our Souls by which we are made conformable unto him; and by a participation of a Divine Nature, in the communication of which, the honour of God doth become most illustrious and triumphant, and the Souls of men are made meet to be *partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in light.*

11. God in Scripture hath been pleased to use all rational methods, and pathetical insinuations to engage us to look after our own happiness; by vehement Perswasions, passionate Expostulations, convictive Reasonings, melting Lamentations, and serious Protestations, accommodating himself unto every faculty, and touching every string of the Humane Soul that may move it toward himself; and because fear of Punishment, and hope of Reward, are the most suitable arguments to work upon reasonable creatures, God hath not been wanting in his addressing himself to us in such a manner that may deterre us from evil, and allure us to good.

12. If we have any pity for our selves, what can be more effectual to prevail upon us to desist from all impiety, then the apprehension of that just severity and displeasure of God, which we expose our selves unto by our disobedience? The *Apostle* was well acquainted with the force of this motive, 2 Cor. 5. 11. *Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we perswade men.* Let us think if we can bear the indignation of the Lord, and stand before the power of his anger; as is his fear, so is his wrath, Psal. 90. 11. *Can we dwell with devouring fire, and lie down in everlasting burnings?* Isa. 33. 14. This consideration was matter of fear to the sinners, and surprized the Hypocrites with terror; 'tis a probable way to awaken men *to flee from the wrath to come.* No arguments take a faster hold of the nature of man in this degenerate state, then the apprehension of danger and fear of misery: for when all ingenuity is lost, and desire of enjoyment of Heaven is extinguished, there will remain a strong propension, which we cannot quit our selves from, to flee from misery, and escape punishment.

13. If

13. If we *love* our own souls, and can be affected with what is *best* for us, behold, God hath *courted* our love with the promises of Eternal Happiness, and endeavoured to *charm* us to Obedience by the most desirable end, and given unto us as certain an assurance of it as we can rationally expect, or as the nature of the thing is capable of, it being both *spiritual* and *future*. And because men of *different* tempers and constitutions, do not propound one and the same thing as the scope and design of their actions, but are variously affected, one with Honour, a second with Wealth, a third with Pleasure, &c. God hath represented the state of future bliss in such variety of expressions, as will recommend it unto all sorts and conditions of men. Let him that aspires unto Honour, take a view of the Crown of Glory, which shall be set on the head of him whom God will honour, and it will provoke him to this *laudable ambition*. Let him that thirsts after worldly Wealth, survey the Riches and Treasures of the heavenly Kingdom, which is the Inheritance of holy men, and it will quicken him

him in his endeavours to be *rich toward God*, that he may for ever inherit the portion of the just in the land of life. Let him who pursues the Delights of Sense, and seeks for satisfaction in these *low* entertainments, lift up his eyes to the Joy of Gods Salvation, *In whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore*; and it will possess him with the importunity of David, *When, O when shall I appear before the Lord, that I may be satisfied with the fatness of his House, and drink abundantly of the River of his pleasure!*

CHAP. XI.

1. The belief of a future Reward admitted by all pretenders to Religion.
2. Rationally inferred by the wiser Heathens.
3. Probably the Virtuoli among them may be happy in the future state.
4. The Heathens had some slight intimations of the nature of it.
5. The Nature of that Happiness not possible to be fully conceived by us here below.
6. The Conclusion of the whole Chapter.

1. **S**uch persons which have admitted into the Articles of their Creed these two Fundamental Principles of all Religion, the *Existence* of God, and the *Immortality* of the Soul, can never scruple the faith of a state of future felicity, or once doubt whether such as are really good and vertuous, shall be blessed with the participation of it. 'Tis to me as easie to believe all the fabulous Narrations of the Popish Legend, all the monstrous absurdities of the Turkish *Alcoran*, and ridiculous stories of the Jewish *Talmud*, as 'tis to believe that such which have made the principal employment of
their

their lives to be serviceable to their Creator, constantly adhering to him in faithful obedience, and breathing after him with vigorous affections, shall be then defeated of the fruition of God, when they are most capable to enjoy him, viz, when freed from those impediments which their conjunction with a terrestrial *vehicle* doth necessarily carry with it.

2. That there is a condition of bliss reserved for the reward of such whose vertuous actions qualifie them for admission thereunto; or as the Apostle speaks, *That there remains a rest for the people of God*, hath been rationally inferred by the more prudent Heathens from their observation of the unequal distribution of good and evil in this world; for surveying the present œconomy of affairs, and finding such which were most notoriously vitious, highly gratified with all those pleasures to which their sensual Appetite inclin'd them; and that the most exactly and severely vertuous, for the most part laboured under those infirmities and necessities which were inconsistent with the happiness of Humane Nature,

ture, seeing these oblique transactions, that they might reconcile this administration of Providence with the Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness of God, did genuinely conclude that this world was a place of *trial and probation*, and that there was a future state for reward and *remuneration*; intimating withal, that the state to which men were appointed upon the quitting this earthly stage, is not to be primarily assigned to an absolute and *fatal decree*, or the manifestation of any Sovereign and Arbitrary Power, but to the righteous progress of that Divine *Nemesis* which insinuates it self through the whole Contexture of the Universe, and will not fail to dispose of persons to such an habitation and such society, for which by their previous Actions and Passions they have prepared themselves, consonant to the Divinity of the Apostle, who tells us, *Rom. 9. 2. of vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*, and *Col. 1. 12. of a being meet to partake of the Inheritance of the Saints in light*.

3. I do not find it repugnant to Christian Divinity, to embrace a favourable opinion
of

of the entertainment of *Socrates, Seneca, Plato, Plotinus, Epictetus*, and such worthy Pagans, in the other World, whose invincible ignorance of many Articles of Religion (whose neglect doth certainly conclude them under damnation, which live under the Gospel *Meridian*) might fairly consist with their *moral innocency* and integrity, and possibly not hazard their future happiness, sith even they might have that faith which the Apostle allows to be sufficient to make a man acceptable to God, viz. a belief that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them which seek him, Heb. 11. 6. which if it produce those fruits, and accomplish those ends for the effecting of which faith is requisite, in the want of necessary means for the arriving to any particular and explicate notions of Redemption, 'tis probable that the root of the matter, the very essence of Religion being found in them, God, (according to the dictates of our faculties concerning his clemency and bounty, and the revelation of his *Philanthropy*) will not condemn them for what was never in their power to act or acquire; and for ought he hath made known

known to the contrary, may by some special indulgence favour them with that revelation of himself which is necessary to eternal blessedness: but this looks so like a Controversie, I shall decline it, referring the Reader to the 12, 13, 14. verses of the 2. of the *Romans*, as being the *Tropick* of the question, beyond which it cannot go, nor I neither.

4. Sith not only the light of Reason, and natural Religion, but also divine Revelation doth sufficiently demonstrate that vertuous and pious persons shall after their departure from this world be translated into a state of blis and glory: It may be worth our enquiry, to understand, if we can, what this blessedness is; where if we follow the guidance of the *Ethnick Poets*, they will lead us

ad amena vireta
Fortunatorum memorum, sedesque beatas.

To the *Elisium* Fields, the Fortunate Islands, &c. and treat us with *Nectar* and *Ambrosia*, and celestial Viands, and admit us into

the rank of the *Aerial Genii*, and feast us with the *Gods*. If the diviner sort of Philosophers, they will advance us to a further degree of blessedness and knowledge of it ; but we shall leave their worthy Essays, and Philosophical conjectures about the happiness of the life to come, and wishing them an interest in it, shall attempt the knowing of this *Riddle* by plowing with Gods *Heifer*.

5. God hath, as it were, ransacked the whole Treasury of the Creation for the imbellishment of that condition into which he will instate his People, and omitted nothing whereby it may be rendred excellent and eligible : 'Tis call'd life, and what is more, eternal life ; that it is life, makes it desirable ; but that this life is eternal, that makes it infinitely so. Sin when finished, brings forth death ; but Religion when consummate, brings forth life ; its end is life without end. The knowledge of the happiness of Heaven is *reserved*, not *reveal'd* ; we speak of it, as of God, not what we ought, but what we can : No man can declare to you what it is, and if he could,
you

you were not able to bear it; 'Tis more
 then *an exceeding and eternal weight of
 glory*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. Καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν.
 There is both an emphasis and elegance in
 the Original, lost in the Translation; 'tis
 glory from one Hyperbole to another Hy-
 perbole; 'tis αἰόλητον, somewhat which is not
 capable of being exprest by words; raise
 up your souls to the highest ἄκρον, yet then
 they will disparage the happiness of Heaven
 by too low and unworthy apprehensions of
 it; 'tis to be limned like *Agamemnons*
 grief, only by a veil; our faculties are too
 weak and impotent to frame an exact *idea*
 of it. The objects we converse with are
 too scanty and indigent to furnish us with
 a notion commensurate with its perfection.
 Our conceptions are too narrow to let in a
 full and determinate Map of that State.
 There is a great part of the Holy Land not
 yet discovered. We have but little more
 acquaintance with the particulars of our en-
 tertainment in the state of *separation*, then
 of that of *Pre-existence* (if the *Hypothesis*
 may pass for truth). Didst thou ever look
 within the *veil*, and see that perfection of

beauty and glory which is in the holiest
 of all? Dost thou know the worth of that
 Crown, the magnificence of that Throne,
 the stateliness of that Mansion, the richness
 of that Prize, the sweetness of that Man-
 na, the brightness of that Glory, the gene-
 rousness that fruit, the purity of that joy,
 and happiness of that society, wherewith
 God will entertain his Children? Canst thou
 tell me what it is *to know as thou art known?*
to be like him, to be one with him, to enter into
joy, to appear in glory, to have God thy portion
and exceeding great reward? Prethee tell me,
 if thou canst, what estate thou shalt be
 possessed of, who art a *coheir* with Christ,
 and shalt *inherit all things*, what dignities
 thou shalt be preferred to, whom the King
 of Heaven *delights to honour*; what trans-
 porting pleasures thou shalt enjoy, who art
 alwayes ravished with divine love, and in
 his imbraces whose *favour is better then*
life? Who can tell how great that good-
 ness is, which God hath laid up for his? or
 what is that largesse they shall receive from
 his bounty? who knows how far the *belix*
 of happiness may enlarge, or can say, *Hi-*
ther to

thereto shall it come and no further? Canst thou give me a bill of that fare where-with those shall be feasted which are invited to the *Marriage Supper* of the *Lamb*? Hath God told thee what portion he will give his children? or what *Estate* he will settle upon his *Spouse*? or what that *Charter* is he hath granted to the *Citizens* of the *New Jerusalem*? Glorious things are spoken of this *City of God*; but no descriptions, Metaphors, or resemblances which an active fancy may suggest can insinuate into our minds an exprets character thereof; for the Apostle tells us, It doth not yet appear what we shall be; till *Experience* be our *Tutor*; we must make a *virtue* of *Necessity*; and let our *Ignorance* increafe our *Devotion*; whilst we are without, all these things are in *Parables*; but after death, he, who now looks forth at the window, and shows himself through the *Lattices*, Cant. 2. 9. will take the veil from his face, and the scales from our eyes, and enable us to behold the *brightness of his glory*; till then the *summum bonum* will not be unridled. No *Mathematicks* can make a *Jacobs Staffe* to take the

dimensions of this State ; 'tis not to be
 measured, though by the cubit of the San-
 ctuary ; it hath an height and length, and
 depth, and breadth, which we cannot stand
 upon the *Earth* and find out. We know
 not here the sweetness of being inebriated
 at the Fountain : For ought we can tell,
 there may be some *powers* in our souls, that
 in this contracted state are wrapt up in
silence and *inactivity*, which upon our
 release from this present confinement to
 inert and sluggish matter may *awaken*,
unfold and dilate themselves for the enter-
 taining of Happiness, now, altogether un-
 conceiveable. But by how much the more
 men live in conformity to the Divine
 Will, and in familiar converse with the
 Deity, so much the more neer approaches
 do they make towards an acquaintance with
 the blessedness in which the spirits of just
 men made perfect are instated. Such which
 are in the Apostles expression, *alienated*
from the life of God, must likewise be
 estranged, as from the *sense*, so also from
 the *understanding* of its concomitant fel-
 city,

6. Let our busie faculties run into never so great a variety of opinions concerning the *appendices* and *circumstances* of the happiness of Heaven, yet will this abide as an undoubted verity, that the *essence* of that bliss is such, that wicked men cannot, considering the nature of it, be partakers thereof; the beauty of holiness is not visible to an evil eye; the fruit of the Tree of Life cannot be relished by a voluptuous Palate; the paths of pleasure in the Paradise of God, will be but as obscure and melancholick shades, to him which hath walked contrary to God; he will be *Tantalized* in the waters and *under* the Tree of life; he can neither enjoy this happiness nor (if possibly he could) rejoyce in it; the reason is, because he is destitute of faculties proportionate and analogous to such kind of objects, whereby the pleasure of them should be conveyed to the Soul; in this sense the Apostle may be understood, when he tells us, *That the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned.* The happiness of Man being the fruition of God as the chief-

est good, the *foundation* of this enjoyment is in that *communion* which there is between God and Man, which consists in the *assimilation* and *conformity* of our actions, affections and dispositions unto the nature and goodness of God, which work, if it be not accomplished in some measure in us, it is impossible we should be happy; for God being eternally the same, cannot recede from the holiness of his own nature to have communion with us in a sinful state; therefore we ought to endeavour a reconciliation of our selves to the purity and perfection of the Divine Being, that thereby we may be made capable of the enjoyment thereof. *What fellowship can light have with darkness, or what concord can there be between Christ and Belial?* till we lay aside the weapons of our hostility against Heaven, and heartily comply with the will of God, and entirely devote our selves by self-denial unto him, that he may be all in all, we have no ground of expectance for that happiness which knows no end.

CHAP. XII.

*An Appendix containing certain Propositions for the
Explicating the Nature of Religion.*

HAVING frequently asserted that true Religion completes the happiness of Humane Nature, and that it is impossible such whose minds are *wholly destitute* of the Principles thereof, and whose lives are *irreconcilable* with its practice, should arrive here to any considerable degree of that peaceable and sedate temper of soul, which *indicates present happiness*; or upon their departure out of this *scene of life*, be admitted to a participation of the blessedness of the World to come; It is not improbable but some one or other which may read this Discourse, will be desirous to have an account of the Nature of Religion, in such particulars at least which may conduce to their direction in the management of so important an affair as I have affirmed it is, as *interesting them in the happiness of this life,*

life, and *intitling* them to that to come: That I may satisfie such a reasonable request, and improve to the best advantage I can that end which I aim at in this present Treatise, *viz.* to *endear* Religion to the world, by rendring it most *rational* in itself, and *advantagious* to its Votaries; I shall attempt the Explication of it in these ensuing Propositions.

1. Proposition.

There is one Supreme, Eternal, necessary, Independent Being, infinite in Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, viz God. The belief of this is the first step to Religion, and so propounded by the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, *He that comes to God, must believe that he is*; where by comming to God, according to the ordinary way of speech with the *Hebrews*, is meant worshipping him, to which none will or can address themselves, without believing *that he is*. So that a firm assent to the *Existence of a Deity* necessarily precedes all Adoration of and Obedience to him: Now if to this Proleptical Principle of the Being of God which is implanted in the Nature of Man, be added

a *deduction* of such Truths which do immediately flow therefrom, as that he hath Sovereign Jurisdiction and Authority over us; that he hath an especial care and providence for us, and respect to us, and such other Truths which are obvious, to infer from the precedent Supposition; we have a true account of the Original of *Natural Religion*, and the Foundation of all that Vertue and Veneration which we meet with in the Pagan World; for unto this *Idea* engraven in their Souls, and the rational consequences thereof, were they indebted for the *seminal* Principles of Honesty and Piety, as might, were it appropriate to the present design, be easily manifested.

Proposition 2.

The Soul of Man is of an Immortal Nature, viz. It subsists and acts after its dissolution from the body. This hath been generally conceded by all Pretenders to any Religion, and runs parallel with the belief of the precedent Proposition, which *abstracted* from this, would have had a weaker influence upon the Nature of Man, to have encountered with the difficulties of
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Vertue and Piety: And from these two *prime notions* dictated by the common reason of mankind, hath naturally succeeded the belief of *Reward* and *Punishment*, and an enquiry after the means of attaining the one, and avoiding the other, which the dim light of Nature could not sufficiently manifest; therefore God hath communicated himself unto mankind, through his Son, the Narrative of whose Transactions we have recorded in the Gospel; and we ought to consult those *sacred Oracles*, that we may be assured what Articles of Faith we are to assent to, and what Duties to perform, which neither the *Light of Reason*, nor the *Mosaical Dispensation* hath dictated unto us: And that we may have as brief and perspicuous account as the nature of the Subject is capable of, I shall proceed to lay down such further Propositions, as may conduce to the ease of the weakest Understanding, in the apprehension of the sum and epitome of that Gospel which recommends to us the Doctrine and Practice of Christian Religion.

3. Proposition.

God was pleased to send his Son into the world, to take our Nature upon him, to redeem the lapsed Posterity of the first Adam, by a perfect accomplishment, through his Active and Passive Obedience, of whatsoever was required of him, as the Sponsor and Mediator of the New Covenant, wherein is promised remission of sin and eternal life.

4. Proposition.

Such only partake of the blessings of this Covenant, confirmed by the Death and Resurrection of our blessed Saviour, which faithfully perform those conditions which are on their part required in order to the attainment thereof. This Proposition is evident by its own light to all those which understand the nature of a Covenant, which is a mutual agreement between different Parties, that upon the performance or failure of the conditions therein expressed, such and such shall be the consequences; so that if one of the Covenanters neglect to perform the condition to which he hath obliged himself, he cannot justly challenge the other

ther, to give unto him any thing covenanted for, to which he was engaged, upon no other consideration; then by virtue of that Obligation from which he is *legally discharged*, by the others evacuating the force of the Covenant, in a contradicting of the Conditions of it. The Application of this to Gods Covenant with the Sons of Men, through Jesus Christ, is so plain and obvious, I shall not insist thereon.

5. Proposition.

The principal and fundamental Condition, whereby we are Entitled to a Right to all the Benefits of the Gospel Covenant, is Faith: The exercise of this divine grace in the various circumstances of our lives is indeed *Christian Religion*, and an effectual means, through *Gods appointment* for the obtaining eternal happiness. As under the oecconomy of *Moses*, the whole duty of man was comprehended in this expression, *the fear of God*: So under the Gospel administration the substance of a Christians duty is included in this word *Faith*. That no man may be defrauded of his happiness,

ness, by being imposed on in his apprehensions of Faith, by swallowing down such imperfect definitions of it as too many *systemes* of Divinity, and confessions of Faith do offer him: I shall tender to his consideration such a description of the nature thereof as may justify it self by Scripture, and correspond with the main design of God in the Gospel, *viz.* the advancement of the Divine life in the world, which hath been not a little checked in its progress, by the reception of some supposititious notions concerning it, as if the *whole* of Faith were a recumbency and affiance on God *for*, or a particular persuasion *of* our own Salvation, making that which is but a *part* or *product* of Faith, comprehensive of its *entire* nature, that they may *relax* themselves from the strictness of that obedience which the Faith of the Gospel doth exact; the *object* of which is then only full, complete, and adequate, when there is a firm assent to its Truth, a secure reliance upon its Promises, an awful dread of its Threatnings, and an universal obedience to its Precepts;

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He that thus believes on the Name of the Son of God, shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Had not self-love, vain-glory, worldly interest, and carnal indulgence given so signal evidences of their prevalency in other affairs, it would have been strange how that perspicuous and practical description of Christian Faith, which so frequently occurs in sacred Writ, should be so ordinarily rejected; and cloudy, and knotty, and speculative notions substituted in lieu thereof.

The Scripture makes an hearty belief of Jesus his being the *Christ*, viz. *the anointed of God*, to be that Faith which is absolutely necessary to Eternal Happiness, as being that to which Justification and acceptance with God is promised; the full understanding of which would silence most of these disputes wherewith the world is disturbed concerning the Nature of Faith, and the influence it hath into the pardon of sin, and setting a man firm in the favour of God, which those will never be willing to understand, whose sturdy and peremptory persuasion that they are the Elect of God, is the

the greatest reason which they have to believe they are so, and who would fain pre-
 scind all acts of Vertue and Piety from
 being essential thereunto. To believe, to
 confess, to know, and such words of know-
 ledge, and acknowledgement, in the Dia-
 lect of Scripture, suppose such apprehen-
 sions and affections as are agreeable to
 the nature of such actions; Confession of
 sin includes in it a regret and repentance;
 and the belief that Jesus is the *Christ, the*
anointed of God, the Prophet, the Priest, and
the King, comprehends demeanour becom-
 ing such faith. To attend to his voyce, to be-
 lieve his Revelations, to follow his guidance
 and direction, is to believe him a Prophet. A
 perswasion that he hath done whatsoever
 God required for the satisfaction of his ju-
 stice, for the expiation of guilt, and for pro-
 curing divine acceptance, and that there is
 Salvation in no other name but his; this is
to believe him Christ a Priest. A perfect
 subjection of our selves to his Laws, and
 willingness that he should reign in us by
 the power of his Spirit; this is to believe
 him *Christ a King*. The consideration of

this tends to the relief of the minds of men, apt to be perplexed with unnecessary scruples concerning the nature of Faith, and their own assurance of the happiness thereon dependant, and is pregnant with powerful arguments to persuade to the exercise of all Christian graces and Moral virtues, which is the scope of all true Religion, and the end of this Discourse.

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ERRATA.

Page 12. line 13. for *nature's* read *nature is*. p. 19. l. 24. l. 14. del. *Ephes. 4. 18. Ephes. 5. 1. p. 22. l. 16. for criticism, we* r. *critism who*. p. 25. l. 21. for *the* r. *their*. p. 44. l. 11. left out *former*. p. 53. l. 18. for *variety* r. *verity*. p. 83. l. 24. for *defer* r. *deter*. p. 88. l. 16. for *bondman* r. *boulema*. p. 91. l. 20. for *its* r. *as*. p. 92. l. 9. insert *at, or to gratifie*. p. 111. l. 18. del. *the*. l. 19. del. *not only*.
